Martha Bayles
Warren Beatty in Azerbaijan

Hugh Kenner
The Prudent Computer

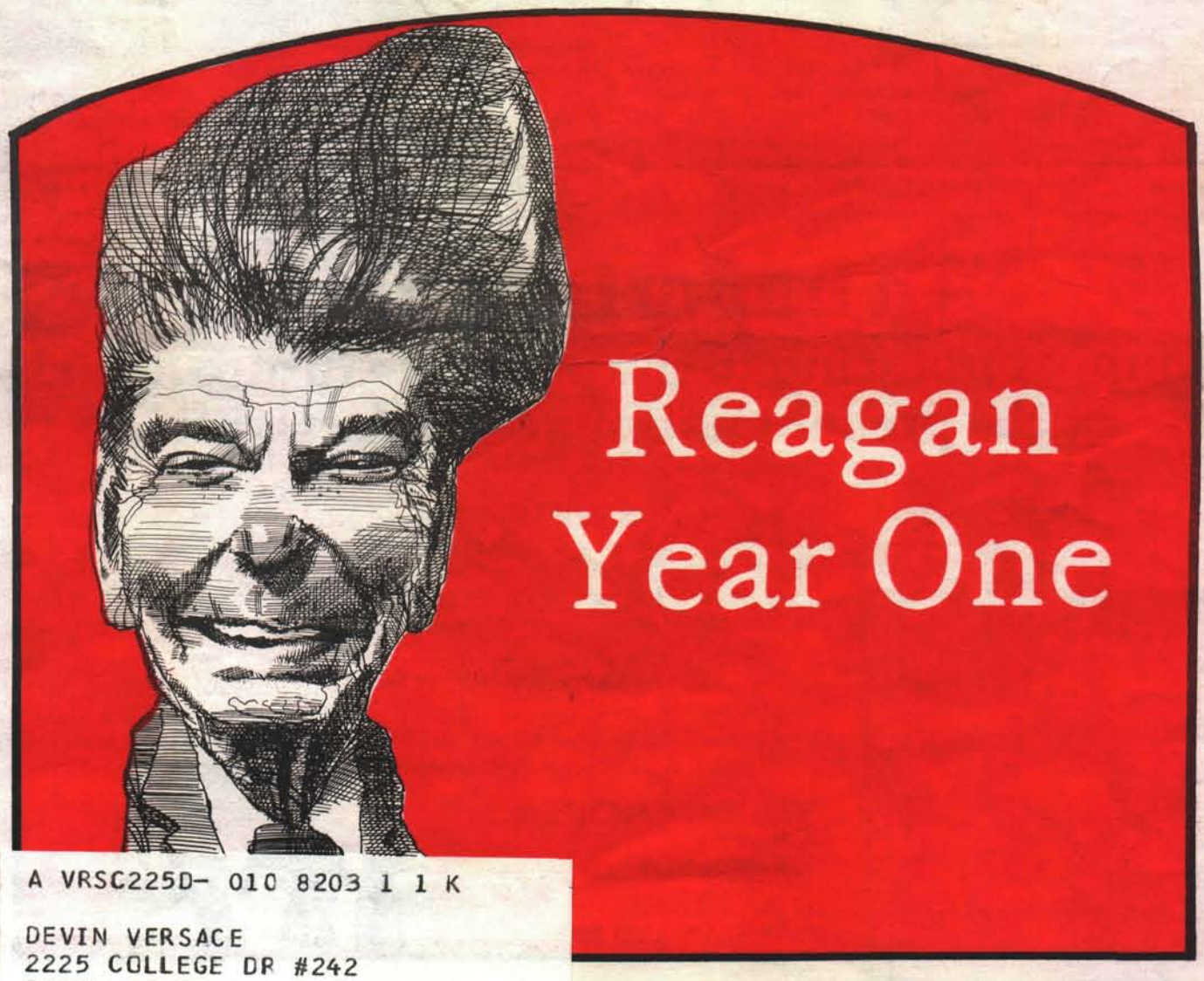
THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR.

VOL. 15 MARCH 1982 NO. 3

Peter W. Rodman, James Q. Wilson

Alan Reynolds, James Nuechterlein

Fred Barnes . . .



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EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• January, and just weeks after the journalists apprised their customers throughout the Republic of a world now sweltered at the threshold of an epochal warming trend that would melt polar caps thus turning coastal cities into mackerel parks, violent blizzards clobbered America visiting upon the land some of the most frigid weather on record. Minneapolis became a snow cone!

• In Poland martial law prevailed, and the democratic leaders of the West gently stewed. Toward the end of the month General Wojciech Jaruzelski—always chastely referred to in the American press as the "Polish leader" rather than dictator or strongman as would be the case were he Chilean or South Korean—raised food prices 200 to 300 percent. He also denounced the Reagan Administration as provocative even as the Administration dutifully repaid American banks some $71 million in Polish loans lest Poland default. President Leonid I. Brezhnev has received the Sun of Freedom order from Afghanistan's own president, Mr. Babrak Karmal. The award was viewed in some diplomatic quarters as a setback for the Reagan Administration, which has been attempting to portray Mr. Brezhnev's regime as repressive.

• President Reagan's State of the Union message came as something of a shock to Washington political experts who seem to feel that the United States would gain stature with the nations of the Third World were it to adopt more of their policies. Decrying both tax increases and extravagant government spending, the President promised to adhere to his overall economic policy and to return some $47 billion in domestic programs to state and local governments. The speech was appraised along party lines, the Democrats abominating it, the Republicans lauding it, and the media applying grease paint and blubbering. White House national security adviser, Mr. Richard V. Allen, resigned. The late Mr. Elvis Presley's 47th birthday was celebrated. And Mr. Michael Foot, leader of Great Britain's Labour Party, took to the public address system on a British Airways flight and delivered a "garbled" diatribe demanding that drinks be served on the house. Bearing in mind his past conduct it was impossible to establish whether he was squiffed or merely warming up an address for the House of Commons.

• The first really solid evidence of a resurgence of Ku Kluxian influence came to light last month when the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Mr. Mike Wallace, the eminent correspondent for CBS News's "60 Minutes," spreads the Kluxian mysteries via watermelon jokes. Fortunately, unbeknownst to Mr. Wallace he was clandestinely taped while imparting his racist and ethnic drolleries to a San Diego banker. No evidence has turned up linking Mr. Wallace with any hate group other than "60 Minutes," but it is worrisome to note that no attempt has been made to oust him from his powerful position. Six years ago similar revelations concerning Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz led to his early retirement. And there is more dispiriting news. In Sacramento, California Mr. Mark Rodman, creator of the "happy face" button, is dead; and the annual economic report from the Soviet Union appeared last month confirming that 1981 was another bust for Soviet enterprise. So bad were things in the Socialist fatherland last year that the government's Central Statistical Administration broke precedent and omitted altogether the size of last year's grain harvest, suggesting either a dreadful harvest or a shortage of ink—or both.

• Despite the Reagan revolution, Carterites still labor to make this country great, especially in the world of intellectual endeavor. In Louisville, Kentucky 62-year-old Mrs. Jane Ballman is grimly slogging on, trying to build up the world's greatest collection of letters from women named Jane—though with the National Endowment for the Humanities now firmly in Reaganite control there is almost no hope she will receive the financial wherewithal she needs. Mrs. Ballman is going through the telephone

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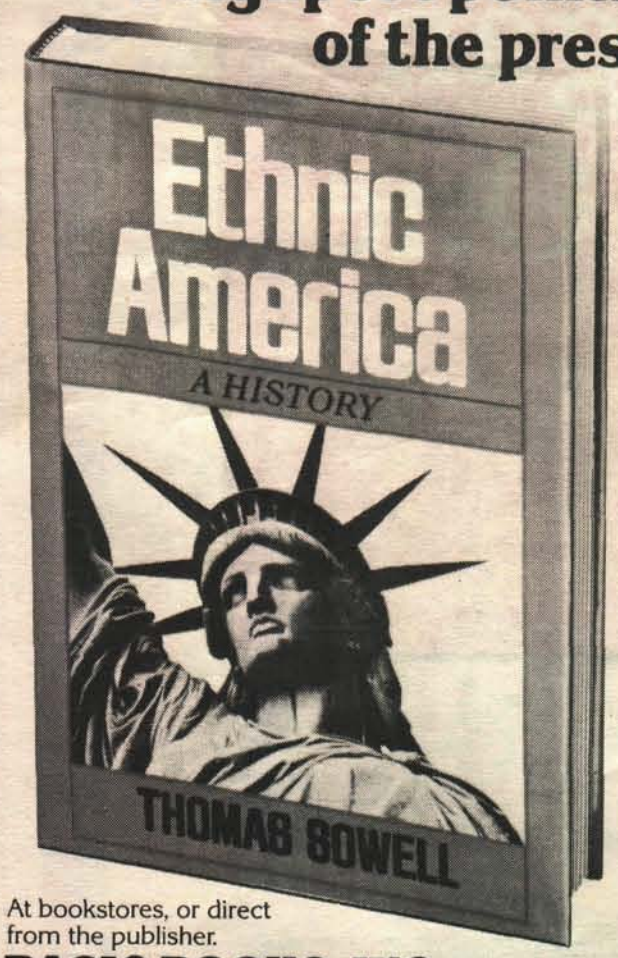
"An important book... a signpost pointing to the probable future direction of the present national Administration."

—David Herbert Donald, front page, New York Times Book Review



David Herbert Donald's review continues: "The heart of Mr. Sowell's book consists of separate but interrelated chapters that trace the historical experience of nine of the largest American ethnic groups....ETHNIC AMERICA is at once useful as a concise history and significant as a quiet but powerful attack on liberal beliefs about minorities, racism, segregation, and affirmative action."

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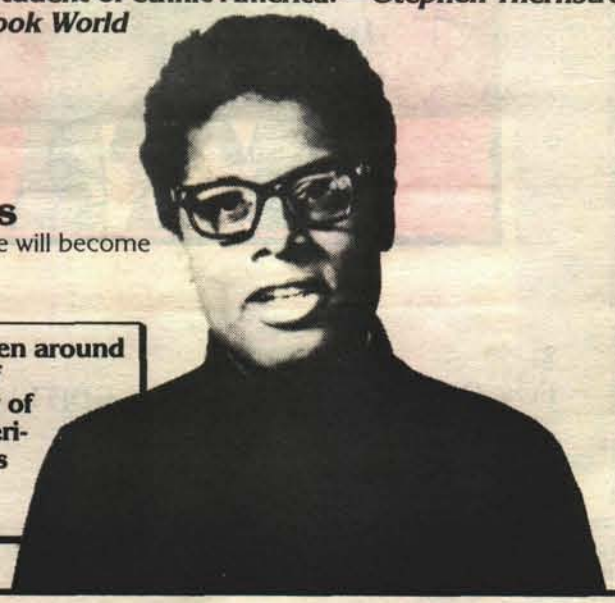

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The American Spectator was founded in 1924 by George Nathan and Truman Newberry over a cheap domestic ale in McSorley's Old Ale House. In 1967 the Saturday Evening Club took it over, rechristening it *The Alternative: An American Spectator;* but by November 1977 the word "alternative" had acquired such an esoteric fragrance that in order to discourage unsolicited manuscripts from florists, beauticians, and other creative types the Club reverted to the magazine's original name. *The American Spectator* is now published monthly at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Second class postage paid at Bloomington, Indiana, and additional mailing offices.

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EDITORIAL

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

WE DEDICATE THIS HOLE. . .

The broiling controversy continues over the Vietnam Veterans Memorial proposed for Washington's Mall. The design accepted by the modern Medicis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is unique. It is a hole.

Doubtless it is to be an elegantly executed hole, the bulldozers and steam shovels being directed by a trained artist well paid. And in accordance with our national solicitude for safety, the National Park Service, I am confident, will duly barricade it so that no drunks fall in. Still, the memorial to the millions who served in the Vietnam war is only going to be a hole. The thing has a lot of people sore. Men like H. Ross Perot, Admiral James Stockdale, and the author James Webb have washed their hands of Memorial Fund. They want a loftier memorial.

Now Elliott Banfield, whose exquisite drawings in publications such as the *New York Times, Time,* and *The American Spectator* testify to his artistic worth, has denounced the memorial hole, and in terms that should stimulate thoughts beyond the current row. Speaking in New York last month, Banfield asserted that "Americans have apparently lost the capacity to speak in artistic forms." This amounts to a "discontinuity in our civilization," for in earlier times Americans relished the opportunity to heave up grand and ornate monuments. Decorative ornamentation would be splashed on the courthouse square or the corner pharmacy, but today Americans have "lost the feel for expressing themselves through art." Once the idea was to raise something up; tallness as seen in the Lincoln and Washington monuments was a value. Now withdrawal and recumbency have replaced that value. Ignorant of positive artistic values, this is the art of the "mentally disturbed."

Adapted from RET's weekly column syndicated by King Features.

Does Banfield believe that memorializing the Vietnam war with a hole is mentally disturbed? I did not ask, but I do believe that the proposed memorial is the expression of an idiotized sensibility. The proposed hole could not spring to an artist's mind spontaneously. This vacuous conception had to be learned, and in an art school.

I am myself no artist. My penmanship is not even admirable. Nonetheless I can tell you that monuments should be above ground. Nor does this make me a romantic; I take issue with the notion that monuments must always depict heroic moments. Better it would be if they showed the more routine elements of life, for instance: Newton goofing off, Churchill playing cards, Grant struggling to escape from an enormous whiskey bottle, or JFK eyeing a well-turned ankle.

In memorializing a war, I say dramatize it in all its fullness. Somewhat along the lines of Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais,* the Vietnam memorial ought to depict soldiers, sailors, airmen, and nurses toiling at all the various endeavors that went into that war—and let us not forget to include the statisticians preparing their graphs for Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

All this should be placed in a realistic setting to instruct future generations on what the war was really like. Off to the side let us have antiwar demonstrators waving a few North Vietnamese flags. And do not forget the spokesmen of the peace movement. They contributed a lot, and their utterances and deeds ought not to be forgotten.

Do you recall the time Jane Fonda was filmed sitting in a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun pointed heavenward? Or how about depicting her as she responded to the POWs' stories of torture in Communist prison camps? Miss Fonda called the POWs "hypocrites and liars." The words could be engraved in stone, perhaps with a reminder that a decade later she was the author of an exercise book helpful to thousands intent on preserving the innocent appearance of youth.

My Vietnam memorial would have to depict both Miss Fonda and Ramsey Clark as they broadcast encouragement on Radio Hanoi. Said Clark in 1972, "It's so pitiful that the violence of technology would be used to destroy the lives of such a gentle and simple and beautiful people." He also said of the North Vietnamese's "indomitable spirit" that it "can never be overcome."

JOHNNY EROS

Last month, as legal problems mounted for Mr. John Holmes, the talented star of *theatre pornographique,* art lovers could be thankful for a journalistic coup scored back in the summer of 1977 when Mr. Holmes granted the *Ann Arbor News* of Ann Arbor, Michigan, a rare interview. It could save his hide, and his hide is only the most celebrated of his many attributes. He also has a splendid intellect, and an enormously humane sensibility. In a word he is a progressive, deserving all the support the liberal intelligentsia can provide.

His need is considerable. At this hour he is under indictment in California for grand theft and receiving stolen goods. Worse still, Los Angeles authorities accuse him of having beaten to death two women and two men at a plush address on Wonderland Avenue, a mere four blocks from the residence of Gov. Edmund G. Brown. I confess the significance of this last geographic detail eludes me, but no news account passed it by, and far be it from me to break ranks. A third woman survived.

Surprisingly, the liberal intelligentsia has been slow to come to Mr. Holmes's support. These are the conservative 1980s, I know, but this interview that I have unearthed should remind them that in Los Angeles a fellow progressive deeply committed to new age values is in trouble. Once they have reflected on what he said in 1977, surely they will be on their feet, and forget not the advances in human justice that they have wrought. Remember the Hiss case. Recall how they sprang Jack Henry Abbott, the jailhouse author of *In the Belly of the Beast,* who, unfortunately, has just been convicted of yet another killing.

In the cool figure of Mr. Holmes we have the makings of another good cause. To him, a role in an X-rated movie was more than a job. It was art. "If people are making love in a beautiful way," he tells the *Ann Arbor News,* "that's not porn, that's beauty." He opposes the commercial priority bestowed by so many actors on their work. Countless X-rated scripts have been turned down by him, especially those calling for "abuse" of other human beings.

True pornography offends Mr. Holmes, and he pins that opprobrious label not on bodies passionately rubbing together but on cursed violence. The real pornographers have been actors like "a John Wayne or Steve McQueen," he says, who made films with "blood and guts everywhere, with gallons of stage blood spewed all over. People send their kids to watch that stuff, it's disgusting."

Finally the pundits should have a place on this memorial. Let us show Anthony Lewis pecking out that 1972 column wherein he noted that "the United States is the most dangerous and destructive power in the world." Or let us show Harriet van Horne reviewing the TV series on the Holocaust and referring to Vietnam as "our own mini-Holocaust."

The artistic goal for our Vietnam memorial should be realism. Why flinch from what happened? When a veteran takes his kids to see how America commemorated his war he should not have to say "It's down there kids." Kids are too perceptive, unless they have been to art school.□

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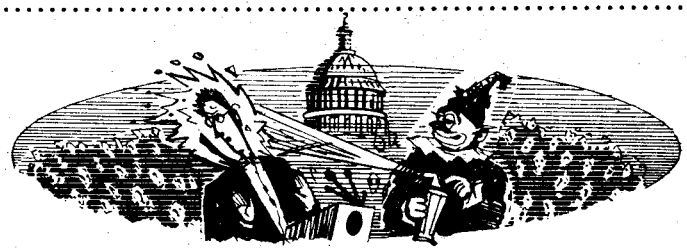
It goes without saying that Mr. Holmes is duly exercised over child abuse and violence in the home. And he is a creative type, having written over 17 television scripts and "at least" five "children's classics."

Mr. Holmes's role in X-rated movies transcends art, however, and reaches into the hushed realms of sexology. "I've straightened out a lot of people's lives," he declares. Overcoming the "hangups" induced by "15 years of Sunday school and a very religious upbringing," he made over a dozen sexual masterpieces, and received "hundreds of letters from people saying I'd helped them, saved their marriage, and improved their sex lives." Alfred C. Kinsey is redeemed!

Alas, now Mr. Holmes languishes in the coils of California justice. He predicted it back in 1977, when he warned of performers and producers of sexually explicit films being victimized by public officials "trying to make political mileage" at the expense of these enlightened marriage counselors.

Of all Mr. Holmes's replies to the *Ann Arbor News* interviewer, my favorite is his assertion of how he might handle vicious anti-porn protestors. In his words he would "shake their hands, buy them a Coke, and talk religion with them. After my upbringing I probably know just as much of the Bible as they do . . . and I believe in God just as much as they do. But I just think they're confused. He [God] probably giggles a lot at all of our hangups." There is the sound of the 1970s for you, replete with unctuousness. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



PROLETARIAN EVOLUTION

by Tom Bethell

I went to the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting at the Washington Hilton last month and had a good old time. The edifice of Science is less monolithic and dogmatic than it has been for many a decade. Visiting it is even something of a "trip." One day I saw a film called "The Asteroid and the Dinosaur" (Time-Life Video), a 60-minute documentary which was thoroughly enjoyable but which 20 or 30 years ago would have been rigidly excluded from polite scientific company along with the theories of Immanuel Velikovsky, which it resembles.

The big problem, which never seems to come any closer to resolution, is to explain why and how all those dinosaurs (and lots of other beasts, too) became extinct some 65 million years ago. Evolutionary theory as constituted at present is unable to explain definitively the extinction of any species, whether it be modern mammoth or ancient archaeopteryx. As Norman Macbeth says in his excellent little book *Darwin Retried*, all explanations of extinction boil down to elaborate ways of saying that the animal at issue stopped reproducing.

Such explanations used to be couched in terms of *gradual* changes in the environment, but the hot new idea is that an asteroid slammed into the Earth, stirring up a lot of dust which in turn shut off the sunlight, thus temporarily stopping photosynthesis, vegetation, and, by implication, dinosaur meals. End of plant-eating beasts, and (a few weeks later, we may assume) meat-eating ones, too.

So we have a return to catastrophism—abrupt change. I wonder how many scientists have paused to consider that catastrophism is quite a bit closer to creationism than it is to the old, slow but steady, stodgy uniformitarianism (causal factors operating in the environment are approximately the same as they have always been) that has served the evolutionary dogma so well since Darwin's day. In the official program of the AAAS meeting, under the heading "Evolution," there occurs the following sentence: "After many years out of general favor, catastrophic causal mechanisms, both internal and external, have once again come to the fore, largely supported by paleoceanographic and geochemical data."

This is quite revealing. Forget that last bit about "data," which is intended to create the impression that scientists just follow the facts wherever they lead and then dutifully and subserviently construct a theory to fit these facts. Not so. There are just too many facts out there, like snowflakes in a blizzard. So the scientists have to *start* with a theory which in turn guides them to the appropriate factual snowflakes. Within certain empirical boundaries, obviously, scientists find what they are looking for and ignore everything else.

The question then becomes: What forces "shape" the permissible theories at different periods? How is it that hypotheses come and go, falling every so often in and "out of favor," as the AAAS program puts it?

If we knew the answer to this question with any precision, we would be able to predict what was coming next. But it is no more possible to do this than it is possible to predict the skirt-length at Paris fashion shows two years from now. In an analogous way, however, it *is* fashion that concerns us. Intellectual fashion is the ultimate shaper and determinant of scientific theory. If your theory happens to be out of synch with fashion (as Velikovsky's collision theories were 30 years ago), then it really doesn't matter how many *facts* you amass, you will simply be cast into the outer darkness of non-respectability.

Anyway, catastrophism is back, and this is but a reflection of a more important underlying change in the intellectual climate. In the first place, we are now witnessing (rather late in the day) the importation of leftist ideas into biology. Leftists are inclined to believe (or at least hope) that life isn't regular and steady, but is on the contrary interrupted occasionally by violent revolutions. The

Tom Bethell, The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent, holds the DeWitt Wallace Chair in Communications at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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nineteenth century that Charles Darwin knew was a time of slow-but-steady progress, and nature was perceived as having an "improving mechanism" built into it—natural selection; Darwin, the "discoverer" (i.e., inventor) of natural selection, was also a uniformitarian. By contrast the twentieth century has been filled with Communism, violence, and revolution; catastrophism is finally in fashion, and natural selection is now regarded with grave suspicion (the fittest survive, yes, but fitness is defined by the survivors).

Left-wing biologists such as S.J. Gould and R.C. Lewontin (note the non-sexist initials in best Science-for-the-People fashion), both of Harvard, suspect that Darwin perceived all those Victorian firms struggling away competitively, with only the fittest surviving, and proceeded to "discover" in nature Victorian capitalism writ large. Put another way, Social Darwinism, usually depicted as a reprehensible *corruption* of Darwinism, was in fact the progenitor of it. (This I find one of the more intriguing left-wing ideas of recent years.)

In the leftist world view, on the other hand, we have dramatic and revolutionary upheavals in nature every so often. This is called "punctuated equilibrium," in suitably arcane fashion. Species chug along happily in a parent-offspring chain (not too sexist, we hope!) for a few million years, then . . . look out! Here comes a Leninist mutation out of the womb, who somehow finds Mrs. Lenin to mate with (there's a bit of a problem there—how do you get a compatible Mr. and Mrs. mutation at the same time?—but we'll gloss over that), and as you can imagine between them and their offspring they entirely sweep away the old order and "build a new society," in which New Leninopod lives and multiplies in egalitarian bliss for a few million years until the next revolution occurs.

It seems to me that Gould and his pals have had quite a success with this new "paradigm." I attended a symposium at the conference, with Gould, Ernst Mayr of Harvard, and Ledyard Stebbins of the University of California among the panelists. For a generation or longer the latter two have been select members of the Evolutionary Curia (other members have included George Gaylord Simpson, Theodosius Dobzhansky, and Julian Huxley). Although Mayr has enjoyed almost Papal authority in this field, he seemed this day to be a little on the defensive against the bearded Gouldish upstart: "Theories always change, modify," said the aged but spry Mayr. "I still think we are within the realms of Darwinism, but the theory is maturing." He also said he hoped to hear no more talk of Goldschmidtian hopeful monsters, because there wasn't even a trace of a hope*less* monster to be found in the fossil record. Good point, but Gould may have been too polite to remind him that there weren't too many transitional forms in the fossil record, either. And if there are no transitional forms (as one or two now believe) then new species must either have started life as hopeful monsters, or been blown in from another corner of the universe, as Francis Crick now seems to be suggesting, or . . . (oh dear) . . . been created by God.

Unless I am much mistaken, there's another and more drastic underlying change taking place. The authority of science itself seems to be ebbing dramatically. In the mid-nineteenth century, science wrested away a good deal of authority from religion and retained it for well over a hundred years. The bishops in their turn ceded it almost without a struggle. (Thomas Huxley reflected late in life that he had been looking forward to a

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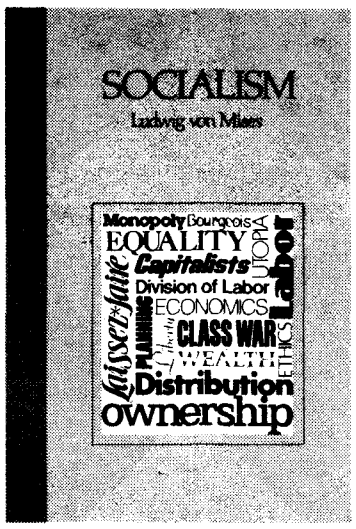

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Peter W. Rodman

THE DILEMMAS OF CONSERVATISM I.

Reagan the diplomat.

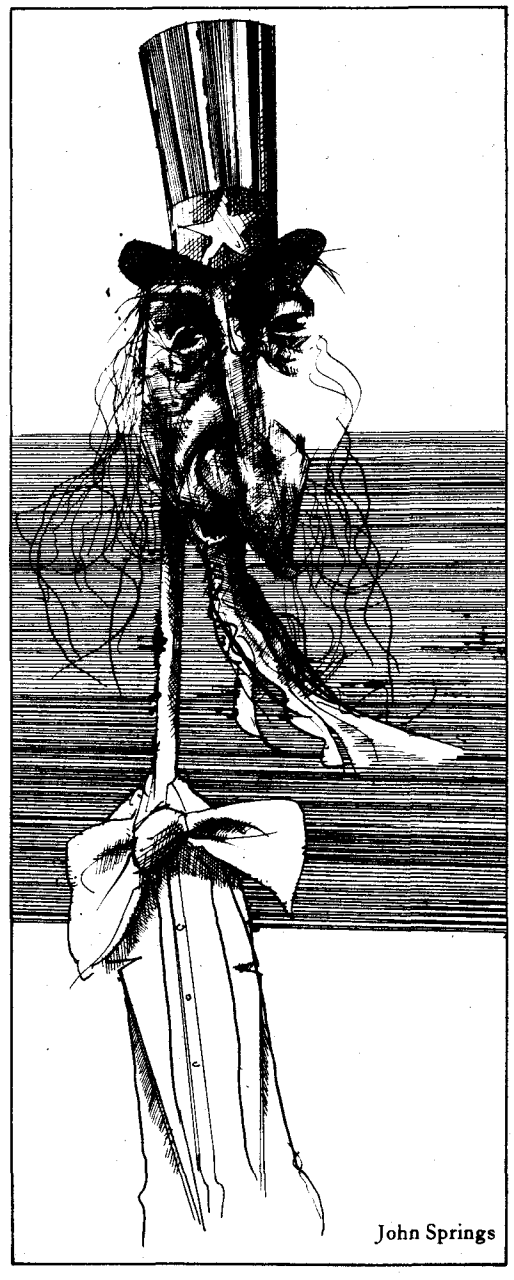
America's intellectual adjustment to the world since 1945 has been full of ironies. Liberals, who had been the most devoted internationalists through most of the century, collapsed under the psychological strain of Vietnam and turned sharply isolationist. Out of guilt at what they had wrought, they regressed to a naive humanitarianism and faith in the efficacy of good intentions. Conservatives, evolving out of an isolationist tradition, have proved to be the most steadfast supporters of American world leadership. But the road has been rocky for them, too. They are patriots dedicated to a strong defense and vigilant against the moral evil of Soviet Communism. But their world view has been more ideological than geopolitical. Neither liberals nor conservatives are by tradition comfortable with the notion of defending a global balance of power against encroachments that cumulatively can endanger our security, of permanent involvement in a struggle with no terminal date and no definitive showdowns.

Interestingly enough, the 1980 presidential election hinged on the very choice between these two classical American philosophies of foreign policy. To this day, Jimmy Carter thinks he lost through the bad luck of the Iranian hostage crisis. That crisis, of course, was *not* an accident. From the beginning, it was the occasion for repeated expositions of the Carter philosophy that "deep social, political, religious, and economic factors" were at work which the United States, alas, could not control; that America itself was guilty of having misused its power; that any government friendly to us was ipso facto unworthy of our support; that anti-Western radicals were simply frustrated idealists to be won over by American goodwill. The result turned out to be an endless series of humiliations for the United States. Carter was overwhelmed at home, in short, because he had so clearly lost control of events abroad.

The American people rejected the diplomacy of helplessness and the philosophy that spawned it. They elected a President who was not ashamed of American power, who was not afraid to stand by our friends and oppose our enemies, and who also had the moral perception to distinguish who our friends and enemies were. In America, the time was clearly right for a more self-confident, vigorous, and assertive foreign policy. The national traumas of Vietnam and Watergate had subsided; the President had a Republican Senate and a conservative Congress; there was broad support for not only a strong defense but also a reassertion of presidential authority in foreign affairs.

Whether the rest of the world would respond similarly to a more forceful American leadership was an open question. Our allies looked forward to an end of American amateurism and weakness. But the new Administration's sophistication would be tested. Inevitably, the United States no longer enjoyed the overwhelming preponderance of power that it had immediately after the Second World War. The considerable power that the United States still possessed would have to be wielded with some finesse, and courage. In a less congenial global environment there would be a premium on cleverness, maneuver, the ability to set priorities, and decisive action. The Reagan team was bound to come up against hard choices that would pull it in different directions, between its mind and its heart.

For foreign policy, properly conceived, is the art of shaping events. It is not simply a matter of issuing eloquent declarations or striking poses. For a superpower, at least, diplomacy should mean foreseeing trends, capturing the initiative, and advancing our purposes, whether in the fluid conditions of a crisis or in the day-to-day conduct of affairs. In the 1980s it would require not only dynamism and philosophical coherence, which the new Administration possessed in good measure, but also a sense of strategy. Or else Ronald Reagan, like Jimmy Carter, could end up the victim rather than the master of events. →



John Springs

Peter W. Rodman served on the National Security Council staff in the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

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Latin America: The Geopolitical Struggle

Since it entered office, the Reagan Administration has been embarked on a campaign to counter Cuban and Nicaraguan military intervention in the hemisphere, particularly in El Salvador. The prognosis is not good.

The Administration correctly perceived the Communist geopolitical challenge—Soviet weapons, Cuban proxy troops and military advisers, East German intelligence specialists, East European training of terrorists, Soviet friendship treaties that encourage aggression—as one of the principal dangers to peace in our time. This is not to deny that the world is wracked by countless other sources of tension, but only to acknowledge that Soviet involvement exacerbates every other problem and that containment of Soviet power is the precondition for the constructive solution of any of them.

The Administration had more than sufficient reason to make an issue of El Salvador. It had some possibility of bipartisan support: The AFL-CIO backed the land reform that the Duarte government had instituted. The Communist guerrillas forfeited much appeal in the United States by their (revealing) opposition to free elections and by the voluminous evidence of clandestine external arms supply from the Soviet bloc. Even the Carter Administration—before January 20—had decided to reinstate military assistance. The Reagan Administration pushed through a modest package of increased aid and sent some 50 military advisers. This strong stand seems to have induced at least a pause in Communist gunrunning.

Then the Administration lost its nerve. The Left organized itself rapidly in this country; the media sent camera crews to El Salvador eager to "bring the war home." The vigorous opposition had its effect. According to several accounts, White House pollsters concluded that involvement in El Salvador was politically a loser. Therefore, the White House reined in the Department of State and shifted El Salvador to the back burner. In July the Administration announced a program for a political compromise. This would have been a reasonable platform for a stronger military policy, but in the absence of the latter it was bound to be ineffectual.

The focus soon shifted to Nicaragua, Latin America's newest totalitarian state, which was in the process of tripling the size of its army and creating the biggest military machine in the history of Central America. Then, strangely, hints of a possible U.S. blockade to contain Nicaraguan interventionism in El Salvador were shot down by—of all people—the Defense Department. Newspapers were filled with comments by Pentagon sources that military action was unwise or not feasible—as if Nicaragua had already become a nuclear superpower.

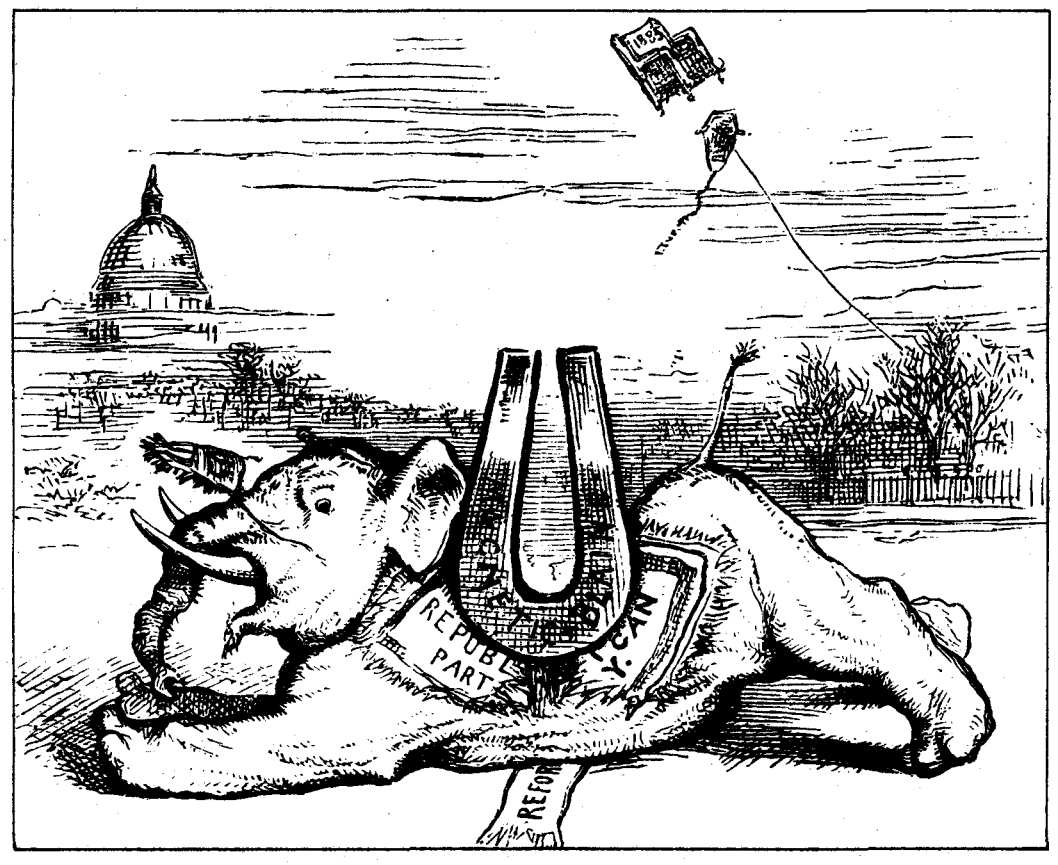
In any case, the Administration is now hemmed in. Its forswearing of military counteraction against Nicaragua helps gain diplomatic support in the Organization of American States but guarantees that such diplomatic support is worthless. The egregious French-Mexican intervention—their joint statement boosting the status of the guerrillas in El Salvador—could only be read as an assessment on Mexico's part that our policy in El Salvador was not succeeding.

The prospects are ominous. El Salvador is a tiny country, in our own hemisphere, with a short coastline, a leader with democratic credentials, and a program of land reform and free elections that is worthy of broad support. If we cannot contain a Communist power grab there, we are in deep trouble. If we fail in El Salvador, the next Communist targets are Honduras and Guatemala—with more unsavory regimes, topographically and politically much harder places to draw the line. Guatemala borders on Mexico—whose social structure is about to go through the stresses of rapid economic growth fueled by oil wealth. Do we really want to see Communist pressures on (and in) Mexico later in this decade?

The Reagan Administration had many plausible reasons for its caution in Central America: the need to concentrate on the President's economic program; recalcitrant foreign affairs committees in the Congress; the unpopularity of military action at home. But history will judge its policy not by the excuses but by the results.

The real tragedy is how little conservative support there was in this country when the Administration desperately needed it. Ardent defenders of the Panama Canal seemed uninterested in preventing the Communization of Central America. American resistance to the Communist geopolitical challenge, of course, meets fierce objection from the Left on the usual grounds: that Vietnam taught us our limits, that military aid is immoral, that the regimes facing an assault probably deserve to be overthrown, and so on. It is profoundly disheartening when American conservatives have no stomach for meeting the challenge, either. They seem more comfortable with arcane debates over strategic arms or minor-league battles over State Department personnel. Unless they are willing to defend the global equilibrium on the ground where it is being threatened, even their support for rearmament seems more a throwback to the isolationist tradition of Fortress America than a true commitment to defend the West.

The classic example from recent history is Angola. In December 1975 the Ford Administration fought a fierce battle in the Congress to maintain a program of military aid to anti-Communist black nationalists fighting against Cuban troops and Soviet arms in Angola. Senate liberals assaulted it for the usual reasons, seeing *American* involvement as the world's major security problem. When the Tunney Amendment was passed 54-22, conservatives were conspicuous by their lack of concern.* Angola fell to a minority Communist government propped up to this day by Cuban troops. The Soviets, for the first time intervening successfully by force thousands of miles from their borders, could only conclude that in the absence of effective resistance there was no reason



*Senators Jesse Helms, Jake Garn, and William Scott were among the 15 Republicans voting *against* the President. Senators Goldwater and Laxalt did not vote. Senator Henry Jackson opposed the President on preliminary votes and was paired against on the final vote.

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not to do the same in Ethiopia, then in South Yemen, then in Afghanistan, beginning a pattern of aggressive interventionism that also continues to this day.

The Reagan Administration is making a valiant effort to repeal the Clark Amendment, the legislation that turned the Tunney Amendment into a permanent ban on American aid to resistance forces in Angola. It has shown its readiness to proffer military and economic aid to friendly countries menaced by the Soviet Union and its radical allies, from the Caribbean to Morocco to Thailand. But the challenge remains, and the most imminent challenge is close to home. In the middle 1960s, Lyndon Johnson sent American troops to prevent a Communist takeover in the Dominican Republic. In the early 1980s, if the Right joins tacitly with the Left in its unwillingness to confront the radicalization of Central America, then it is depressingly clear we have *not* yet recovered from the Vietnam syndrome.

The Soviet Union and Europe

Conservative Presidents usually have an advantage in dealing with the Soviet Union. They come into office with a hard-line reputation that gives the Soviets an incentive for caution. Liberal Presidents, on the other hand, seem to have an uncanny knack for getting into dangerous crises: They start out eagerly trying to reassure the USSR of our desire to conciliate, which seems only to tempt the Soviets to overreach and ultimately forces the United States to put its foot down when things are on the verge of getting out of control—the Cuban-missile-crisis / Afghanistan syndrome. A President known in advance to be tough and strongly anti-Soviet seems to have better luck avoiding such cataclysms.

A conservative President, if he is clever, also has opportunities for creative diplomacy that a President discounted as weak usually lacks. For one's gestures of flexibility are more meaningful—and more compelling of reciprocity—if one is thought to have an alternative.

The Reagan Administration set about the necessary rebuilding of American military strength. It devoted new effort to the informational battle, pouring out State Department white papers on Cuban interventionism and Soviet disinformation, and Defense Department brochures on Soviet military power. But when it came to East-West diplomacy, the Administration took a while to get its bearings. It seemed inordinately proud of such small gestures as making the Soviet Ambassador drive to the front door of the State Department (instead of a more private entrance). This was harmless, but not worth trumpeting about—especially when the Administration's first major policy decision in this area was to lift the grain embargo against the Soviet Union.

The most charitable interpretation of the lifting of the grain embargo is that it was not a foreign policy move at all: The President had his domestic imperatives and his campaign promises to fulfill. In foreign policy terms, our economic leverage is one of our most important weapons. It should be wielded with some political calculation and never handed over unconditionally. Aside from the economic benefit to the Soviet Union, the grain sales forfeited much of our influence over our West European allies, whose hunger for trade with the USSR has always been unconstrained by political judgment. We could hardly dissuade the West Germans from the gas pipeline deal with the Soviet Union once we had been so casual over grain. And our grain policy proved an embarrassing anomaly when in December we attempted to mobilize economic sanctions against the USSR and Poland. The Administration's free-market philosophy must be tempered by some political management of East-West economic relations if we are to have any effective strategy against Soviet expansionism.

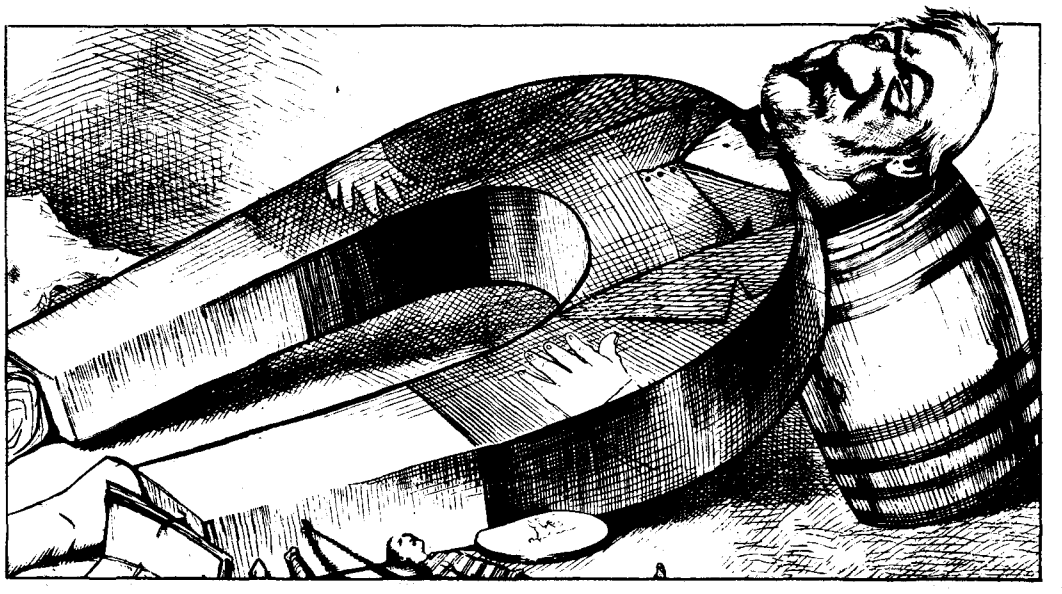
A bigger problem with our European allies arose, of course, over arms control negotiations. The Administration found itself for a time in the absurd position that, in the era of a relentless Soviet military buildup, invasion of Afghanistan, and intimidation of Poland, the *United States* was coming to be regarded in Europe as the world's greatest menace to peace.

It was not entirely the Administration's fault. A more vigorous and self-confident American policy was bound to cause frictions with European allies who have spent the last several decades growing prosperous, evading defense necessities, and chasing the mirage of Soviet reasonableness. It was also inevitable that nuclear strategy in Europe would be a troublesome problem: Now that there is no longer an American strategic superiority to offset the Soviet theater superiority in Europe, which NATO relied upon for a generation, the obvious necessity is to build up NATO's conventional forces; this has been evaded by Western governments for two decades. And much of the hypersensitivity in Europe on the subject of nuclear weapons deployment is the price we are still paying for Jimmy Carter's absurd waffling over the neutron bomb; the humiliation he inflicted on Helmut Schmidt did harm that now appears irretrievable.

Nevertheless, the new Administration in part created its own problem. Unlike a previous conservative President, Richard Nixon, who adopted the rhetoric of an "era of negotiations" as a kind of protective coloration, the Reagan Administration came into office dubious about arms control as a matter of principle and convinced that leaving any ambiguity about its anti-Communist fervor would be a form of moral disarmament. While this forthrightness was beneficial in helping to raise the consciousness of the American people, it was bound to collide with a more precarious European political situation. A stronger and more self-assured America was in the overriding interest of the free world, but it was also bound to turn alliance relations into a matter of some delicacy.

Intense pressures on the Administration from the Left were predictable—if not from domestic opinion as during the Vietnam war, then from our allies. The Administration let itself be trapped. Until the President's speech of November 18—a sweeping offer to refrain from deploying U.S. intermediate-range nuclear weapons in exchange for the dismantling of Soviet SS-20s—the United States was under assault by "peace" demonstrations all over Europe and, more importantly, by incessant importunings from allied governments to negotiate with the Soviets.

On the merits, the Administration was far more correct than the Europeans. The West's priority must be to restore the military balance; without this there is not even any prospect of realistic arms control. The debate over intermediate-range nuclear weapons is no mere tactical squabble; if the end result were to be, in effect, that Soviet missiles aimed at Europe are permitted while NATO missiles to deter them are deemed unacceptable, this would raise the most profound questions about what is left of our military alliance. →



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The misjudgment lay not so much in substance as in an inability to maneuver through the minefield. Gratuitous American comments on the dangers of pacifism or about limited nuclear war, even though analytically sound, only intensified the pressures from the Left.

As for nuclear arms control, the United States was caught off-balance because it had not yet decided on a negotiating position with respect to either strategic arms or intermediate-range nuclear forces. Months went by with the Administration increasingly on the defensive. It seemed almost frightened by the prospect of negotiation. A lot of capital was expended in a rearguard struggle over whether or not to enter talks—as if the mere fact of a negotiation were contaminating. It should go without saying that the United States has a negotiating position—some view of a preferred outcome, some vision of *our* objectives. Instead of formulating our own terms and seeking to dominate a process we could not avoid, we lost the initiative.

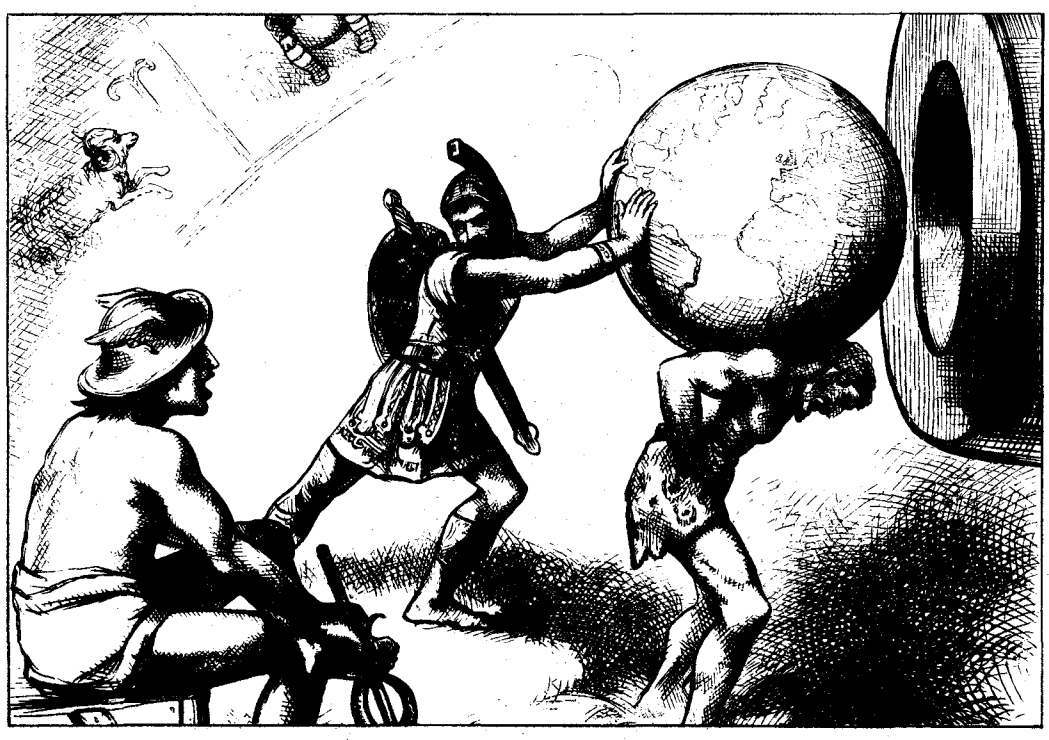
The attitude toward negotiation was puzzling. There seems to survive in American conservatism another vestige of the isolationist past, a grassroots fear that we decent, honest Americans are always being taken in by crafty foreigners. "America never lost a war and never won a conference," Will Rogers used to crack. We have always been profoundly uncomfortable with the entanglements and complications of negotiation (even negotiation from strength), as if fearful of being subjected to temptations we have not the willpower to resist. Whatever the historical antecedents, it bespoke a strange lack of self-confidence in an Administration that prides itself on its reaffirmation of America's will and strength.

The United States found its balance with the President's successful speech of November 18—which illustrated precisely what should have been done earlier. There is no better antidote to anti-Reagan paranoia than Ronald Reagan himself stating a positive program. It is the lesson of the 1980 campaign when candidate Reagan, in the debate with Jimmy Carter, spoke thoughtfully of his abhorrence of war and his eagerness to advance arms control beyond the stage of the flawed SALT II. It was not a change in his position, only a recognition that the American people relished neither weakness nor war and wanted to hear a positive statement of American goals. Our democratic allies are no different. Indeed, a presidential trip to Europe early in his term would have been a perfect opportunity for considered, reasonable statements of Reagan's position on all issues of concern to Europe and might well have headed off or dampened the budding anti-Americanism.

Ironically, having played the bull in the china shop too long on arms control, the Administration then bent over backward more than it had to in December and January to avoid acting on its true convictions over Poland. On Poland, the President's instincts were right: The destruction of Solidarity was an outrage, and a *Soviet* outrage. Allied evasions that it was an "internal Polish affair" were as honest as the notion that Vichy was a spontaneous French decision.

We could do little or nothing to save Polish freedom. The objective had to be to make the Soviets pay some price, to demonstrate that Western economic relations with the East are conditioned on some standards of civilized behavior. If we fail, the West will have proved instead that the dependency works the other way: that regardless of Soviet brutality, the democracies are now hooked on aiding the technological development of the Soviet war machine.

The Administration sought a collective Alliance response, fearful of becoming itself the issue again in Western Europe if it acted unilaterally. Eventually the President acted correctly on his own convictions, forthrightly condemning the Soviet Union, declaring a few unilateral economic sanctions, and exerting moral pressure on European governments, particularly West Germany. In the end, the Western response fell far short of what was needed, however, and it is one of the historic tragedies of our time.



Poland has provided the Administration a brief respite from pressures to jump into bed with the Soviet Union. But the pressures will soon mount again. Liberal voices will be heard declaring that the breach of European peace makes arms control "all the more urgent"; the Soviets will encourage it as part of a new "peace offensive" precisely in order to make people forget Poland. The Reagan Administration will have to show both the fortitude to stick to its positions and the surefootedness not to get caught again on the defensive. This will be a tricky path to tread. The summit meeting with Brezhnev later this year, to which the Administration has virtually committed itself, will be a trap unless the United States has done something to establish its mastery over the trend of events.

China

In China policy, too, the Administration has been torn between its head and its heart.

Concern for our friends in Taiwan is an expression of the sentiment of the American people; it was never the intention of the United States, at any time since the rapprochement with China began, to turn Taiwan over to forcible incorporation into the mainland. Loyalty to friends is a valuable quality in a great power. Our friends in Peking may someday have a stake in our adherence to this principle in other contexts.

At the same time, the relationship with Peking is one of our most important strategic assets in a world endangered by Soviet expansionism. American and Chinese foreign policies have been parallel in many (not all) parts of the world and on most major issues of the global balance of power. The bond has proven its durability through several shifts of leadership on both sides.

As in all foreign policy, one sometimes has to make hard choices. The Administration has reasonably enough continued to sell defensive spare parts to Taiwan; it has wisely resisted Taiwan's requests for advanced fighter aircraft. Peking's threat to attack Taiwan has in fact been in abeyance ever since the Sino-American rapprochement began—which is not a coincidence. While Peking has the sovereign right to make its own decisions, it knows that the relationship with the United States would not survive an invasion of Taiwan. It is not in our interest to provoke the very danger that we seek to prevent.

Toward the end of the year, a sour anti-American tone crept into Peking's

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rhetoric, which began to denounce us together with the USSR as the "two superpowers." The causes lie deeper than sensitivities over Taiwan: Partly, it reflects basic domestic divisions in China; mainly, it reflects China's perception of the international environment. With the United States conducting a more explicit policy of opposition to the Soviet Union, what China wants from us—reassurance that we will not give the USSR a free hand to turn on China—it is now getting without cost. It need not compete with the Soviet Union for America's favor as it did in periods of closer U.S.-Soviet relations. China is therefore free to burnish its militant Third World credentials and to indulge its taste for revolutionary rhetoric.

At the same time, Poland is bound to be unnerving to the Chinese. The Soviets have just reimposed the unity of their empire; the Western Alliance is still in disarray. The Sino-American relationship will endure as long as we do our job of maintaining the global balance of power. If doubts grow about our willingness or ability to do so, the problems in the relationship will become much more serious.

Third World Diplomacy

In the Third World, meanwhile, the Reagan Administration has been more successful in its diplomacy than its liberal critics imagined possible. This shows the advantages a conservative President has if he wields his power cleverly. Ironically, "North-South" policy is providing a hint of what might have been accomplished in East-West policy (before Poland) with an analogous strategy.

South Africa agreed several years ago (long before the Carter Administration, in fact) to grant independence to Namibia, the former League of Nations mandate of South-West Africa. The major issue outstanding now is who will rule it: whether a radical guerrilla group, SWAPO, will be placed in control of the territory by United Nations fiat, or whether a fairer political process, with opportunities for other indigenous groups and with guarantees of minority rights, will ensure a more hopeful future. It is absurd to imagine that South Africa can be tricked into putting into power armed radicals who may turn the territory into a base for guerrilla operations against it. Nor is it in America's interest to accelerate the radicalization of southern Africa.

This was the Carter Administration's mistake. It embraced SWAPO as a group of "progressives." It stepped up pressure on South Africa over its internal policy of apartheid at the same time that it was asking for South African cooperation in a Namibia settlement. Black Africans, encouraged by the United States, raised their demands. The negotiation, not surprisingly, ran aground.

The Reagan Administration inherited a negotiation and had the good sense to seek to shape it, not abandon it. Black Africa expected the worst—and therefore the Administration got considerable mileage out of the reasonable positions it came up with. It dropped the dangerous pro-SWAPO bias of the Carter diplomacy and offered proposals that had three inducements for black Africa: first, that further excessive demands were now clearly unrealistic; second, that the new proposals were, at bottom, fair (and commanded European support); and third, that they had more of a chance of South African acceptance. The result is a negotiation that seems to be succeeding. The United States is taking charge of the process, shaping the negotiating agenda, and producing results that serve our objectives.

At the same time, as noted, the Administration has sought repeal of the Clark Amendment, which bars American support for anti-Communist nationalists in neighboring Angola—SWAPO's guerrilla base. Repeal would strengthen the Administration's hand considerably in southern African diplomacy. Pressure on the Cubans in Angola weakens SWAPO's coercive power in Namibia and increases the prospects for moderate solutions throughout southern Africa.

The Namibia diplomacy and repeal of Clark are thus complementary. The effort to settle Namibia gives the United States a positive platform in Africa in the name of which to resist Soviet and Cuban intervention; it, too, strengthens African moderates who share our abhorrence of Communist adventurism. The United States is thus positioned in southern Africa exactly as it should be: in favor of equitable settlements of the racial conflict, and in a strong moral position to act against Soviet and Cuban imperialism by whatever means necessary.

A similar strategy was pursued successfully in another area of policy. In October, a "North-South" summit meeting in Cancún brought together leaders from rich and poor countries to discuss the problems of economic development. The gathering was convened by Mexican President Lopez Portillo, who seems to find Ronald Reagan a considerable improvement over his predecessor (Montezuma's true revenge).

Any Third World leaders who came to Cancún expecting (or seeking) confrontation with the arch-capitalist were disarmed by an American policy that spoke positively of global economic growth, expanding and liberalized trade, continuation of foreign aid, and resumption of a dialogue on world economic problems. The United States did not give away the store; what it did was show itself to be forthcoming with ideas and programs consistent with its own principles. The President's ferocious reputation made his moderation more impressive; American firmness discouraged excessive demands; and an imaginative diplomacy shaped an outcome that even the *Washington Post*, eager to find fiasco, was obliged to acknowledge as a presidential success.

It was clearly a learning process, at least for some of the Administration's more conservative adherents. Part of the price one must pay for a successful strategy such as that pursued at Cancún, for example, is foreign aid. Every President who wants to conduct a foreign policy learns that economic and military assistance is a vital instrument of his power in foreign affairs. But, alas, it has no domestic constituency. The Left abhors military aid as immoral and wants economic aid to be purely humanitarian, uncontaminated by political objectives; the Right despises the very thought of giving away money to foreigners. Liberals have managed over the last decade to pass restrictive legislation forcing aid to be given increasingly through multilateral channels and for eleemosynary purposes only. Conservatives, unfortunately, have not been willing to help defend an adequate program of bilateral aid for friendly countries conceived as a tool of diplomacy.

The Reagan Administration in November and December found itself for a time in the ludicrous position of wanting a foreign aid bill but not wanting to lobby Republicans to vote for it. The Democrats held the bill hostage, insisting that the President fight for his own foreign policy—which he eventually did. It was not a great moment in the history of American world leadership.

Middle East

In the Middle East, with the time not ripe for stunning breakthroughs, the Administration is finding that sticking to its principles is the wisest policy.

We have shown that we stand by our friends when they are threatened by Soviet clients or radicals of the stripe of Qaddafi:

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Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Oman, and, of course, Egypt and Israel have been given the wherewithal to defend themselves. After the debacle in Iran, it was of no small importance in the Middle East to correct the impression of a United States fearful of using its power or ashamed of giving aid to its friends. The AWACS decision had merit in this context.

The problem with the AWACS was diplomatic more than military. The campaign to sell it seemed to catapult Saudi Arabia into the position of America's key friend in the Arab world—which I am not sure was even intended. Whether intended or not, the emotional largesse bestowed on Saudi Arabia was probably more than the Kingdom should be asked to bear, and was also demeaning to Egypt, the pivotal Arab country as far as the peace process is concerned. A major strategic objective of our policy should be to show that Egypt, having turned toward us and toward peace, is vindicated by demonstrations of American backing. The kind words about Prince Fahd's peace plan, so soon after the AWACS vote and Sadat's murder, were bound to be unnerving to both Egypt and Israel. Egypt's prestige is heavily invested in Camp David, whose premature obituary Prince Fahd seemed to be announcing. And as Israel prepares to relinquish the last of its security buffer in the Sinai, overloading the plate of demands on it is hardly the way to promote negotiating progress.

In the peace diplomacy, the United States has no good options to choose from. To its credit, the Administration has resisted the blandishments of Arab friends, European governments, and American "experts" to embrace the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It should continue to do so. Pressures are growing, particularly as Camp David seems to falter, and to many it may seem a tempting way to buy Arab goodwill. It would be a serious tactical and strategic mistake.

Arab moderates endorse the PLO partly to protect their flanks against the radicals. Europeans endorse the PLO because of their dependence on oil; their most difficult diplomatic problem is to figure out which group of Arabs they should grovel before at any given moment. The United States, however, has responsibility for the negotiating process. We do not have the luxury of adopting positions for their short-term public relations value. If the present government in Israel is unwilling to discuss a territorial settlement even with Jordan, how is thrusting the PLO forward going to make a negotiation easier? Bringing the PLO into the game would be both a symptom of failure and a guarantee of it.

In the absence of possibilities for maneuver, the Administration should stick to the basics. Our long-term strategy must be to show that moderation is rewarded, that extremism is penalized, and that American policy is not driven by pressures, either domestic or international. We must look to the security of our friends. The autonomy talks should be given a chance to succeed. The Arabs must learn to be willing to enter negotiations without a guarantee of the final outcome; the Israelis must learn that they can have either territory or peace, but not both. With patience and a steady hand, the United States must nurture the conditions for future progress, leading all parties toward the realization that conciliation is the only route to achievement of their objectives.

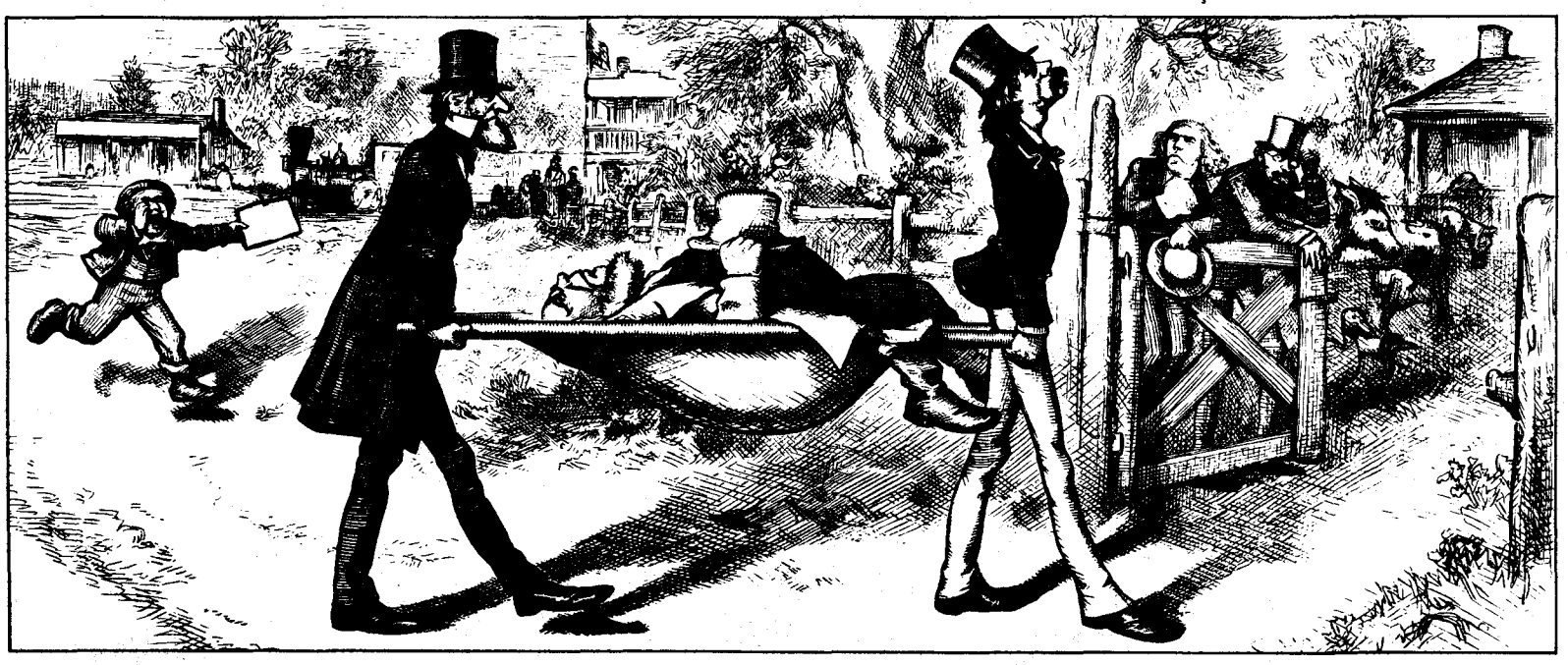
Policymaking

As 1982 began, the bureaucratic problems which had been such an embarrassment during the first year seemed to have been remedied. Sniping between the White House and the Department of State subsided; the upgrading of the office of the national security adviser should improve coordination in day-to-day policymaking; and the Polish crisis found the crisis management mechanism headed by the Vice President (renamed the "Special Situations Group") working smoothly.

This Administration is philosophically united to an unusual degree, in stark contrast to the Brzezinski/Vance/Andy Young feuds of the Carter period. The Reagan team is in accord on a view of the world which tells them—correctly—that America is entering a decade of international danger. Therefore, history will not forgive them if disarray prevents the purposeful and effective foreign policy that they, better than anyone, know is needed more than ever. Problems with menacing adversaries, obstreperous allies, and a recalcitrant Congress cannot always be avoided; the one element that a President ought to be able to ensure is the cohesion of the Executive Branch.

The Administration's task is intellectual as well as administrative. It has begun to learn that doctrine is not the same as policy, that success depends not only on the mobilization of American power but on the imaginative use of it. It must harness strength to strategy; it must learn the virtues of maneuver as well as of the frontal assault. It must battle the Soviets in the hard slogging ground of the geopolitical contest in distant (and not so distant) lands, not only in the ideological enthusiasms of the Voice of America. It must educate the American public—and American conservatives—in the necessity of combatting Soviet aggression in the small challenges, lest we soon be faced with a major one. It must show its self-assurance in the diplomatic arena and its fortitude in its willingness to risk short-term unpopularity at home.

The voters of 1980 elected a President who represented the best in America—conviction, self-confidence, courage, realism. It is an opportunity for leadership that must not be squandered through bureaucratic confusion in Washington or hesitations that cause it to lose control of events abroad. The Administration has matured in office; it has learned from experience and confounded skeptics on one issue after another. It is capable of great achievement. Too much depends on its success for it to allow itself to fail. □



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James Q. Wilson

THE DILEMMAS OF CONSERVATISM II.

Reagan the politician.

The remarkable accomplishments of President Reagan's first year in office should not blind us to the fundamental dilemmas facing anyone who wishes to give a conservative direction to American Government. The central dilemma might be stated (or overstated) this way: In a modern industrial democracy, governance is essentially a nonconservative, perhaps even anticonservative, activity. That is to say: Given a large, activist state in a complex economic order, the daily routine of governing requires officials to do things that maintain or enlarge the significance of government itself. Liberals may be right in saying that, for better or worse, they are the natural governors, for they welcome a large and expansive government.

We have become so accustomed to thinking of the federal government—rather than the community, the church, or society—as the obvious center of our collective lives that we forget that this very assumption is anticonservative. In the 1910s and 1920s, very few people would have supposed that the health of our economy was to any significant degree dependent on an economic policy fashioned in Washington. Indeed, the very concept of an "economic policy"—or even a concept of the "economy"—was largely an alien notion. How could one think of the economy, or make a policy for it, when the very idea of the gross national product had yet to be invented, when no one knew how many people were employed or unemployed, when the federal income tax did not exist, and when the recently created Federal Reserve Board saw its role simply as ensuring stability in the national credit markets and not as doing anything about general economic conditions? A liberal administration might come to power and make the government do more (about public lands or industrial trusts); a conservative administration might then come to power and, by refusing to act, lead the government to do less.

Today, an administration cannot be conservative by doing little, it can only be conservative by doing a great deal—cutting the budget, controlling the money supply, refinancing the social security system, altering business regulations, enlarging the military establishment, managing foreign commerce and deploying its navy to achieve its political aims abroad, trying to formulate the attitude the federal government should take toward prayers in public schools and the use of busses to integrate those schools, and conducting a debate over the moment during pregnancy at which life begins. Small wonder that President Reagan seems to draw lessons, not from the administrations of William McKinley or Calvin Coolidge, but from that of Franklin Roosevelt.

To judge the record of Mr. Reagan's first year, one must measure it against his goal of altering public expectations about what government is supposed to do. The President's tactical victories in Congress will, in the long run, prove less important than his strategic success (or failure) in persuading the American public that government ought to play a different role in their lives than it has for the last half century. In pursuing that strategy Mr. Reagan faces two formidable obstacles. The first is to alter the natural logic of democratic politics; the second is to supply a convincing definition of the conservative cause he espouses.

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Democratic politics is essentially a process of addition. The competitive struggle for votes provides powerful inducements for politicians to promise more to their constituents. Conservative policy requires that in general the government do less. It offers a politics of subtraction. The conservative justification for this, of course, is that a government which does less will by its reduced scale promote private initiative, economic growth, and personal freedom. These may be correct arguments, but in a hotly contested election they are not often persuasive ones.

If that is true, how is it that in 1980 Mr. Reagan won the Presidency and the Republicans won the Senate? I cannot do justice to this question in a paragraph, but in brief my view is this: Virtually every informed analysis of the 1980 vote, including those carried out by such conservative groups as the American Enterprise Institute, agrees that Mr. Reagan won because of popular dissatisfaction with Jimmy Carter and the national problems with which his Administration had become associated. Over half those who voted for Mr. Reagan described themselves as liberals or moderates. Ronald Reagan won for much the same reason François Mitterrand won in France—the public no longer had confidence in the incumbent. The Republican victory in the Senate was a more complex matter, but essentially involved the replacement of liberal senators (Bayh, Church, Culver, Durkin, McGovern) who had fortuitously come to power in conservative states (Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire, South Dakota), and the defeat of more centrist senators who had lost touch with their constituencies (Nelson, Talmadge, Magnuson). With some exceptions, it is

James Q. Wilson is Professor of Government at Harvard University.

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hard to find in the 1980 election a pronounced shift in opinion toward a more conservative view of the federal government's economic and welfare responsibilities.

When he took office, the only mandate Mr. Reagan had was to be different from his predecessor. His policy had four major components: to cut individual tax rates substantially, to reduce federal spending on a variety of social programs, to deregulate large segments of American business, and to take a firmer line against the Soviet Union backed up by a larger military establishment. As he began his first term, public opinion provided clear support for only *one* of these policies (increased military spending). It provided little or no support for deregulation, only modest support for tax cuts (more Americans favored a balanced budget than immediate tax cuts), and only equivocal support for reduced federal spending (in general the public wanted the government to spend less but with only a few exceptions it wanted more spent on individual programs).

In short, President Reagan had to create public and congressional support for a policy that promised the government would do less in every arena save foreign and military affairs. The short-term success of this politics of subtraction is well known. But I am skeptical that it will last, at least in its present form. Perhaps the change most likely to endure is the cut in individual tax rates. It was an extraordinary accomplishment. It was the first across-the-board, multi-year tax cut in memory, the first deliberately designed to provide larger dollar benefits to the well-off than to the not-so-well-off, and the first to contain a provision (not yet in effect) to index tax brackets so that inflation will no longer be able to produce automatic tax increases without Congress's having to vote for them. The immediate effect of the change can be exaggerated, however; for most taxpayers, the Reagan plan does not offer a true tax cut, but only the repeal or offsetting of previously planned tax increases (arising from social security tax hikes and bracket creep).

The congressional debate over the plan was largely a debate on principle, lightly flavored with some old-fashioned horse-trading over the inclusion of various "sweeteners." It is the kind of plan that will be difficult to alter in coming years because any significant change will require Congress to vote for increases in individual levies—something it has been notably reluctant to do except in wartime. But the prospective loss to the Treasury (and, of course, gain to the public) of about $750 billion in tax revenues over the next five years will make the debate over expenditure policies more difficult, more divisive, and more uncertain than ever before. (The attentive reader will note that I do not take seriously the view of some supply-side economists that this tax cut will pay for itself through increased economic activity. In tax policy as in expenditure policy, there is no such thing as a free lunch.)

The expenditure cuts ($35 billion in the first year) are another matter. To achieve these cuts and the legislative authorization for even larger reductions in future years, the President and his congressional leaders had to devise a tactic that, if successfully institutionalized, will transform the nature of Congress. I happen to think that Congress's nature is not easily transformed, and thus I am doubtful that the tactic will be institutionalized. Essentially, the Republican congressional leadership converted the first budget resolution, which ordinarily had been little more than a target to shoot at, into a binding budget ceiling coupled with a set of instructions to the legislative committees directing that cuts be made in certain programs. The effect of this maneuver was to force Congress first to vote on the budget cut before voting on individual appropriations. Under the combined impact of a recent election, Republican solidarity, the defection of the "Boll Weevils," skilled presidential lobbying, and the (correct) perception that the public wanted the government to spend less, the budget ceiling was passed.

No one should belittle the significance of achieving these cuts. But neither should anyone exaggerate their magnitude or believe they will remain intact. Government spending will (if the claims made for the cut prove correct) be $35 billion less than it would have been, but still more than it had been the year before. Expenditures were not "cut"; rather, the rate of growth of expenditures was slowed (from about 12 percent a year during 1971-1980 to about 5.4 percent a year during 1982-1985). Moreover, some of the larger cuts might have been made anyway. CETA public service jobs had been in deep trouble for some time owing to reports of waste, fraud, and abuse. Other cuts, such as those in student loans, were achieved by ending the eligibility of higher-income families who had only recently become beneficiaries. And many cuts involved shaving off relatively small sums from a variety of programs.

I do not believe a budget-cutting strategy can be sustained. The Constitution calls for national elections every two years. Congressmen willing to vote for cuts in early 1981 may be most reluctant to do so in mid-1982, especially if the normal electoral cycle appears in effect so that the party of the incumbent President loses House seats. But even apart from electoral considerations, the Congress as an organization will resist any procedural arrangements that, like the binding budget resolution, reduce the autonomy of the legislative committees, force congressmen to make hard choices, and lessen the ability of individual legislators to be of help to constituency groups. Finally, the bulk of the cuts will be felt first by state and local officials who will no doubt prove adept at directing blame for program reductions toward Washington.

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The federal budget devotes one-half of its outlays to entitlements, one-quarter to national defense, and one-tenth to debt service. That leaves one-seventh for everything else. It is politically impossible to "make the government smaller" by requiring that one-seventh of the budget absorb nearly all of the cuts, just as it is politically impossible to end inflation by plunging the country into a prolonged recession. Every serious conservative congressman knows this, and by this time next year, Washington will thus either have abandoned its effort to make the government smaller, or slowed the increases in the (so far untouchable) defense and entitlement areas, or increased taxes.

The choices made then, more than any made so far, will be the decisive ones. In February 1983, the White House will already be planning for the 1984 presidential election and Congress will have just returned from an election in which the Democrats may have made gains in the House (remember, Ronald Reagan is not as popular as Dwight Eisenhower, and under Eisenhower the Republicans lost congressional seats during the off-year elections of 1954 and 1958). The temptation will be very strong to do the following: avoid raising taxes (higher taxes are unpopular), avoid reducing entitlements (lower benefits are unpopular), stop cutting the Vulnerable One-Seventh of the budget (state officials and interest groups will not tolerate any more cuts), and cut the defense budget (who cares?).

That would be, in my judgment, a grave error. It would be a return to politics as usual, with our national security the pawn of our short-term domestic political needs. The first responsibility of this government—of any government—is to ensure that our military capacity matches our overseas commitments. The match does not yet exist and will not exist for some time. The sizeable increases in 1982 defense outlays (around $18 billion) are little more than a continuation of trends begun in the last year of the Carter Administration and take only a small step toward ensuring that the window of strategic vulnerability is closed, that we can fight and win in the Middle East, and that our Navy can keep open the sea lanes in the four oceans in which it has responsibilities. The real cost of the defense build-up will be in 1983, 1984, and beyond—precisely in those years in which the political temptation to cut the defense budget will be the greatest.

Whatever the economic case for or against tax increases to cut the deficit, the political case for them is strong. When President Reagan in his State of the Union Address forswore tax increases, he was forswearing any effort to rearrange the political incentives that, left as they are now, will tempt Congress and the public to cut the defense budget. Both Congress and the public worry about large deficits and neither will be much reassured by claims that deficits do not contribute to inflation unless they are monetized. The statement will not be persuasive or, if persuasive, will simply convert the Federal Reserve system into a political football. The President's commitment to across-the-board tax cuts may well be a sound economic strategy but it is not clear that it is a sound political one if you believe that defense is the nation's first priority. The economic benefits of the Reagan tax cut would not have been vitiated if the plan had been phased in over a longer period or if it had been coupled with higher taxes on energy consumption. Whatever economic costs might have been incurred by such changes would have been more than offset by the political benefits.

Any effort to reverse the direction of American public policy is a gamble, dependent on imperfect economic knowledge and an impatient electorate. The industrial revitalization on which so much depends requires the creation of favorable expectations which in turn may take several years of lowered tax rates, stable or declining interest rates, and modest or shrinking federal deficits. But our political system does not easily tolerate long-term plans. Representatives are always running for reelection after their first 18 months in office. It is difficult to reconcile the needs of a long-term policy cycle with the realities of a short-term electoral cycle.

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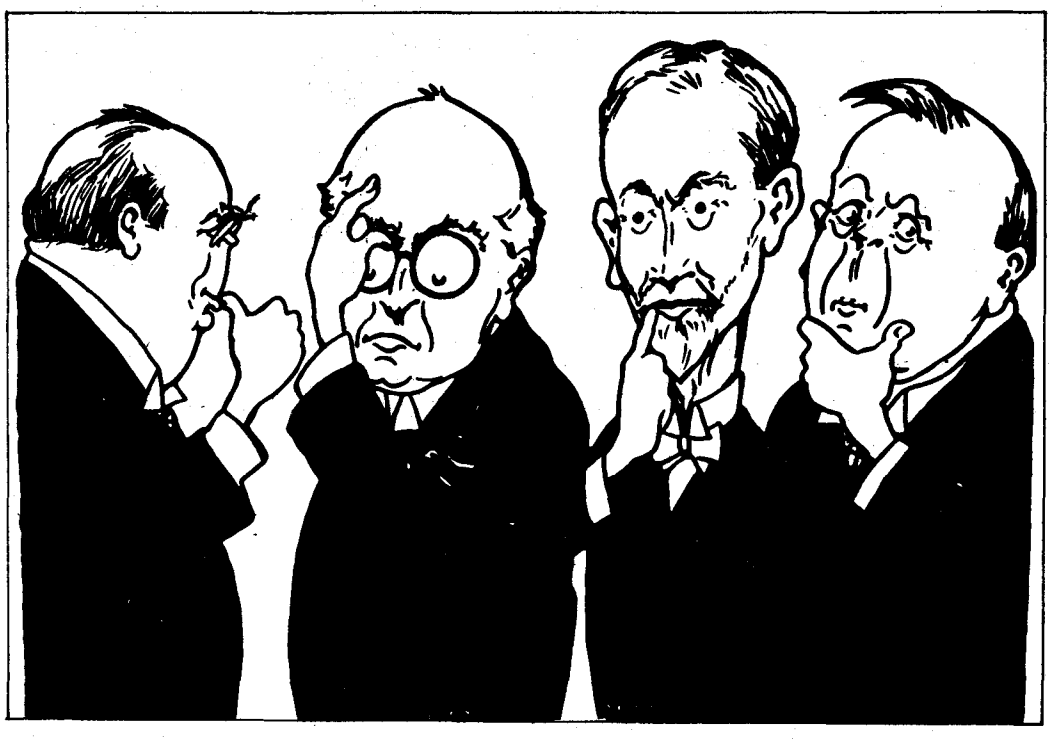
The chances for making a long-term gamble work depend heavily on the ability of the President to provide a persuasive definition of the nature of a conservative state. The coalition that helped him win the nomination was made up of groups—intellectual libertarians, born-again Christians, business-oriented conservatives, doctrinaire conservatives—who disagree sharply over what "conservatism" means. (I recall George Will's observation that to speak of a libertarian conservative is like speaking of a promiscuous celibate.)

The struggle for influence in the Administration among these groups is already well advanced. Those who believe that it can be settled by appealing to a sharply defined and coherent ideology are, in my view, mistaken. Public opinion—even the opinion of self-described conservatives among the public—simply will not support any simple doctrinal answer to the problem of explaining conservatism. Various poll data summarized by Everett Carl Ladd (*Public Opinion,* February/March 1981) suggest that self-defined conservatives do not, as one might suppose, support passing the Equal Rights Amendment or pressing environmental concerns to the exclusion of energy development, while they do favor (as do voters of every ideological hue) allowing prayers in the public schools. But rank-and-file conservatives are opposed to an amendment banning all abortions; they do not think that cutting taxes is more important than balancing the budget; they do favor the draft; and they think we are spending too little on government programs aimed at crime, drug abuse, and national defense.

Are these views inconsistent or shallow? Not at all. Though they do not add up to an ideology, they share a concern for the general well-being of the society, defined in terms of traditional communal values—thrift, religion, economy, decency, the obligation to serve one's country—coupled with a reasonable individualism that would settle the question of abortion by some means well short of a constitutional decree. And self-defined conservatives are only a minority of the population at large; thus, the principles of a conservative state must not only be congruent with what conservatives already believe, they must be generally acceptable to some nonconservatives.

The draft is one of several important test cases. President Reagan has reiterated his libertarian views about the draft, indicat-



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ing that while he is willing to continue draft registration he is opposed to conscription itself except in a grave national emergency. The justification, apparently, is that the government has no right to conscript labor; to do so is a violation of freedom. We should hire soldiers. In short, national service, except in a crisis, is an occupation, not an obligation.

I think most Americans disagree with the President here. I think most believe that the country has a right to expect some form of service from all or most of its citizens and that national defense is a common obligation, not one of several possible occupations. There are, of course, practical reasons as well for thinking that continuing reliance on the all-volunteer force may be difficult. In another ten years, the armed forces will have to attract one out of every three male high-school graduates not bound for college if its *present* manpower levels are to be maintained. The ratio will be even higher for the expanded military establishment contemplated by the Administration.

But the fundamental issue is not practical at all; it is philosophical. It is the same philosophical issue found at the root of public policies toward crime, schooling, pornography, drug abuse, "victimless crime," and even immigration. The issue involves a conflict between the libertarian and the conservative definition of a good state. The libertarian favors a minimal state and maximum individual freedom. The conservative favors a state that, though limited, is strong within those limits. And some conservatives readily accept the view that the government has a tutelary and sumptuary role, and is properly concerned, albeit under carefully defined restrictions, with producing virtue among its citizens.

The average citizen probably cares little for these definitions, but he cares greatly about the consequences of accepting one definition rather than another. He applies to these consequences a kind of crude welfare test: Does this argument, if put into practice, make society better off? (One of the striking findings of students of public opinion is that most voters are influenced in their political preferences more by how they evaluate the condition of the economy as a whole than by how they evaluate their own economic condition.) In applying this test, citizens do not, except at a rather abstract and ambiguous level of discourse, care very much about what might be the proper size of the government. What they care about deeply is that the government, whatever its size, follow right principles. The major political conflicts of American history have been about those principles, not about the size of government. They have been about union, slavery, liquor, war, welfare, the franchise, and the currency. If conservatives make the test of conservative politics its success in reducing the government to the correct size, they will be engaging in a debate that most people believe is irrelevant.

The size of government is important in some ways, to be sure—how much money is spent through public rather than private budgets, and how burdensome taxes may be, are important questions. They have been addressed by the tax legislation and budget-cutting legislation of 1981. Some additional steps are still possible, such as constitutional amendments that induce Congress to act more responsibly in voting on appropriations. But the major challenge facing the Administration now is not to continue the search for government-shrinking steps, but to begin to enunciate more clearly the principles on which our government, of whatever size, should operate.

Let me suggest four topics that ought to be the subjects of major and sustained presidential remarks, coupled with clear White House directives to subordinates:

(1) National defense: To what ends are we prepared to use military force? What are the obligations of the citizen to society to perform military (and nonmilitary) service?

(2) Income maintenance: What do we mean by a "safety net"? Can we justify income maintenance programs that maintain the incomes of well-off people? If not, on what principles of contribution and benefit are these programs to rest?

(3) The environment: The people expect the government to take reasonable steps to conserve our natural heritage—clean air and water, valuable forest and shoreland. What criteria are to govern the decisions to use or conserve these resources?

(4) Race relations: How does the government propose to give effect to the widely accepted standard of equal opportunity for all and merit selection, without pursuing the not widely accepted standards of quotas, goals, and forced busing?

At present, each of these four issues is being managed by lesser officials, on the basis of imperfectly understood criteria, and in ways that lead the press and much of the public to see the matters in narrow partisan terms. The public notes that we are spending more on the military, but is not certain why; though it approves of becoming stronger, it is not certain what strategy underlies that strength. The President is thought to be unfeeling about old people. Environmental issues seem to be in the hands of James Watt, widely perceived to oppose conservation and favor exploitation. Policy on race relations seems to be managed by an assistant attorney general about whom no one knows very much.

The reality may be much better than this, but if a conservative regime is to succeed, it must make its practice vivid and its ideas compelling. There are only a few issues of overriding national importance; on one of them, the economy, the President has been clear and forthright as to his policy. On the others, the signals are hard to decipher. War is too important to be left to the Pentagon lobbyists, the environment too important to be left to a controversial secretary of the interior, income maintenance too important to be handled casually by staff assistants who appear more interested in saving money than in clarifying the grounds on which income will be maintained, and race relations too important to allow policy to be secreted piecemeal out of a series of small actions.

One of the great strengths of this Administration has been its ability to use the Presidency as a means for stating goals and mobilizing consent, leaving the management of policy to others. It is time to extend that sound strategy to other key elements of a conservative agenda. □

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Alan Reynolds

THE MATTER WITH REAGANOMICS

Will it meet the supply-side standard?

Those who would blame our economic problems on last year's policy changes face a difficult task. They must somehow argue that the prospect of future tax cuts caused a recession, or that people would have gladly financed more long-term loans at lower interest rates had they been assured the Fed would keep printing lots of money.

Since nobody really believes that tax cuts cause recession or that loose money is good for bond and mortgage markets, there has been no criticism of the Reagan fiscal program that can be taken seriously, nor any serious alternatives offered on the tax and budgetary side.

The problem is not in anything the Reagan Administration did, but in something it did not do. Markets were initially euphoric because they also expected a new policy to end inflation. What they got was not a bit different from Jimmy Carter's policy: Inflation is something you constantly "fight" by narrowing the budget deficit. Nobody ever expects to win this fight, of course; nor should he with such meaningless tools and objectives.

A supply-sider, we are repeatedly told, is anybody who thinks "deficits don't matter." Since nobody in his right mind thinks deficits don't matter, this implies that supply-siders are mentally deficient.

I am quite concerned about the government's budget strains, but I am also concerned about the similar financial problems of American households and enterprises. We might be able temporarily to improve the government's cash flow at the expense of the private sector, but it is hard to see how this would help: The government could then borrow less; the rest of us would have to borrow more—even to pay our taxes. We tried to tax our way out of a monetary crisis after we forced England off the gold standard in 1931. We tried a tax surcharge to fix our next defiance of the gold standard in 1968. It doesn't work. Poland is now proposing more taxes to solve its own monetary collapse. That won't work, either.

Many seemingly separate problems—from the U.S. budget deficit to the Polish debt crisis—are actually symptoms of a single problem: Long-term credit is too scarce and too expensive. The government is groaning under a $100 billion annual interest expense for the same reason that corporations are dangerously dependent on short-term loans and young households are stuck with onerous three-year mortgages. As Maury Harris of Paine Webber put it, "high federal deficits primarily reflect the impact of Fed-related high interest rates both on depressing economic activity and tax collections and raising government interest costs." Federal deficits are a *consequence* of the global monetary crisis, not the cause. If interest rates were anything close to normal, the budget would be in surplus. Wall Street bond traders know that, though a few notoriously partisan economists claim ignorance.

According to Henry Kaufman of Salomon Brothers, there is supposedly a "clash" between tax-rate cuts to expand real GNP and a monetary policy to slow the growth of nominal GNP or inflation. This assumes either that inflation is good for growth, or that an increase in the money supply could lower long-term interest rates. If true, bond yields would have been much lower in the seventies, when money was abundant, than in the sixties. Interest rates, on this theory, should also be lower in Argentina than in Switzerland. The Fed can expand the nominal quantity of money, but cannot thereby increase the *real* value of the money stock, much less the attractiveness of investing in claims on future dollars (bonds). Plenty of new money does not mean plenty of long-term credit; it usually means the opposite.

The Kaufman-Stockman theory is that the volume of borrowing determines its price. With government and business both borrowing more, interest rates must go up. That sounds plausible, but so does the exact converse: If interest rates go up, there will be fewer dollars borrowed. Neither statement is enlightening. The interest rate at which borrowers and lenders strike a deal does not depend on how much money changes hands. In fact, the volume of credit has been generally weak since 1979.

In its original form, the Reagan policy was to lean primarily on reducing marginal tax rates to improve real growth, and to construct a long-term monetary policy to end inflation. Additional support was to come from slowing the growth of federal spending, and making regulations less capricious and less costly. Dave Stockman, however, soon elevated a balanced budget as the sole objective, neglecting important deregulation (e.g., natural gas) and totally ignoring any long-term monetary reform.

Stockman and the mass media adopted an extreme Keynesian theory, wrongly blamed on Wall Street, that the collapse of bond and mortgage markets was entirely due to the budget deficit. Inflation either had nothing to do with money, or else monetary policy was the helpless victim of federal borrowing. Yet we have had much larger deficits before, relative to the size of the economy, and long-term interest rates were never even half of what they are today. President Carter brought Treasury borrowing down from a $99 billion annual

Alan Reynolds is chief economist at Polyconomics, Inc., and former vice-president of the First National Bank of Chicago.

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rate at the start of the 1975 recovery to a negligible $8 billion by the second quarter of 1979. Inflation and interest rates did not go down, they went up. The deficit has risen since then, but conventional measures of money have slowed down. Inflation also looks better by some measures, though it is scary when officials seem pleased by an 8.4 percent GNP deflator in the fourth quarter (the 1980 average of 9 percent was the worst since 1975).

There are many possible ways of testing the theory that inflation and/or interest rates rise and fall with larger or smaller budget deficits. I have looked at federal budget and off-budget deficits as a share of GNP, related Treasury borrowing to Federal Reserve purchases of securities, and compared deficits with inflation and interest rates in a dozen countries. In each case, no link was found between deficits and inflation (or interest rates). In each case, adherents to the fiscal theory proposed yet another test. So, I added state and local budgets, or federally guaranteed and sponsored loans, or private borrowing. I also compared each of these series with the volume of savings or total borrowing. I looked into U.S. and foreign history. Still, there is no visible link between government borrowing and interest rates or inflation. When Bill Niskanen of the CEA recently confirmed this sort of evidence, he was widely chastised for daring to introduce facts into a theological debate.

Everyone assumed that supply-siders abhor all of Mr. Stockman's proposed excise tax hikes, but I was rather indifferent about it. When taxes have long been stated as a specific number of pennies, like the gasoline tax, it makes some sense to bring taxes up to compensate for past inflation. Poincaré did that in France in 1926, but he also cut income tax rates in half and restored the gold standard.

The real objection to the panicky push to pass new taxes is that it gives credence to the idea that another $15 billion in federal revenue will have an effect on inflation or interest rates. That is the silliest idea since the OMB's "September initiative" which was supposed to make bonds more valuable by trimming $4 billion off federal spending. A waste of scarce time.

The central economic trauma is quite obvious. People, and the institutions that manage their assets, are unwilling to lend money for long periods of time without a very high yield. The high yield is to compensate for the risk that today's dollar may be worth a dime when 20-year bonds and mortgages are paid off.

It is not simply that long-term interest rates are still too high, though they certainly are, but that borrowers cannot know whether they are going to end up high or low after adjusting for unknown future inflation. No indexing scheme quite gets around this problem. How can a household, with a variable-rate or balloon mortgage, plan its finances when future mortgage payments may be unbearable? That sort of fear provokes retrenchment, and the problem is pervasive. For one thing, the shortage, uncertainty, and expense of new mortgages has vastly reduced the mobility of labor, which is crucial to dynamic efficiency.

The economy's precarious dependence on short-term credit mirrors the growing unwillingness of people, and the institutions entrusted with their savings, to commit funds for long periods of time—to finance bonds, stocks, or mortgages. It is not possible to exaggerate how dangerous this situation is. It is not a new problem, but has accelerated markedly since the 1968-73 moves away from gold. This is not a coincidence.

In 1965, corporations could finance new investments by selling long-term bonds at 4.5 percent. Mortgage interest rates were below 6 percent. That was not unusual. In the entire history of our country, long-term interest rates almost never exceeded 5 or 6 percent. The only exceptions were during the two previous experiments with irredeemable paper money—Continental currency in the Revolutionary War, greenbacks in the Civil War.

Our third experiment with fiat money began, symbolically, with the elimination of silver coins in 1964, the two-tier pricing of gold in 1968, and the final repudiation of our national pledge to convert dollars to gold on August 15, 1971. Since that time, the cost of long-term financing has gone higher and higher, regardless of the savings rate, and regardless of the budget surplus of 1969 or the shrinking deficit from 1976 through 1979. For over a dozen years, we have seen an accelerating loss of confidence that the dollar will hold its purchasing power in the future, and therefore a growing unwillingness to commit funds to the long-term investments needed to keep the economy from deteriorating.

The shortage of long-term credit cannot be solved by enticing people to save a larger share of existing production, because that production is too low and added savings are just flowing into short-term money markets. Taxing consumption is not fundamentally different from taxing incomes or saving (future consumption), and would not help. And contrary to economist John Rutledge, large losses on real estate do not necessarily make the losers anxious to buy bonds. What is needed is to make bonds a safe investment again.

Bonds and mortgages are a promise to pay dollars in the distant future. The interest rate on such claims to future dollars clearly depends most of all on the expected future purchasing power of the dollar. The value of future dollars, in turn, is mainly dependent on *future* monetary policy. What the Federal Reserve is doing right now, or what the latest price index says about current inflation—these things are at best indirect clues to the future. No short-term change in the amount of money could have prevented the bond market collapse that led to recession. Trouble in long-term markets requires a long-term solution.

This is not to let the Fed off the hook. Pledging to let interest rates approach infinity in order to slow M1B is enough to

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scare anyone into borrowing before that happens. As rates went up, people naturally kept more money in high-yield money market funds, overnight RPs, and Eurodollars. It spends like money but keeps M1B down, and each dollar of M1B then finances more spending than usual (that is, velocity speeds up). From the third quarter of 1980 to the same quarter of 1981, annual trends in nominal GNP rose from 8 percent to 12 percent—spending or "demand" accelerated as M1B slowed down.

The Fed understands how arbitrary the measures of money are becoming, but not what to do about it. Anthony Solomon, president of the New York Fed, observes that "we may already be nearing the point where the Federal Reserve can influence the growth of these broad measures [of money] only indirectly by first influencing the behavior of the economy itself."

To slow some arbitrary measures of money, the Fed feels obliged to toss an occasional credit crunch to flatten the real economy. Chairman Volcker is also a firm believer in "slack" (a euphemism for unemployment) as a way to fight inflation. Annual recessions, unknown since 1918-1920, are the Fed's new technique for lowering credit demands by bankrupting borrowers. Yet recessions do not provide any lasting relief from inflation. Indeed, inflation worsened during the last two recessions, and has almost never improved significantly for even a single year after recession.

Fed governors would also have us believe that deficits and money growth are interchangeable substitutes. That is, we could fight inflation with budget deficits and slow money growth, or we could fight inflation by balancing the budget and printing lots more money. This is what Mr. Solomon means when he says "we shouldn't overload monetary policy with the full burden of countering inflation." Cut the deficit, the Fed promises, and we'll pump up the money supply. They did that for President Carter, after all, and we saw what happened.

The hard truth is that the nation still has no plan to get inflation to near-zero and keep it there. We have no predictable monetary policy at all, no way of knowing what monetary authorities intend to do in the years ahead or how or why. The Fed manipulates overnight interest rates to influence the nonborrowed part of bank reserves in order to approach shifting targets for a variety of measures of money in the hope of having some unspecified impact on total spending and thereby perhaps either affecting inflation, engaging in countercyclical fine-tuning, or manipulating interest and exchange rates. In short, the Fed uses inadequate tools to hit irrelevant targets in order to meet unknown or unachievable objectives.

We can prudently ignore short-term interest rates, like the bank prime rate. If the long-term doubts about the dollar were solved, short rates would take care of themselves. Businesses, households, and governments could then reduce their precarious dependence on short-term credit, making short-term interest rates lower and more stable. Indeed, the long-term interest rate reflects the expected trend of short-term rates, so it is now telling us that any easing of short-term rates will be very brief. In late January, the prime rate was four percentage points lower than a year before, but long-term interest rates were two percentage points higher. That is not an improvement.

Long-term interest rates clearly reflect expected inflation. And inflation clearly depends on how much money there is and how rapidly it is spent (velocity) relative to the growth of production. More production can help a bit, but no supply-sider ever said that tax cuts are the cure for inflation.

To sum it up, the collapse of bond markets reflects expected inflation and inflation depends on monetary policy.

The difficulty with continuing to pursue fiscal solutions to the world monetary crisis is not that the initiatives are bad, but that they are irrelevant. Constant fiddling with changes in spending and taxes, where additional changes are now necessarily quite small, simply diverts attention from genuine solutions to genuine difficulties.

Give Stockman a vacation, or lend him to Poland. Convene economists from the Treasury, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Federal Reserve and ask them to nail down a monetary policy that will instill long-term confidence in money. Ignore the White House political advisers, who are inherently afraid of meaningful change. Hold an international monetary conference, like Bretton Woods but better.

The Administration has at least begun to talk about monetary policy, but the talk adds to the confusion. Sprinkel thinks the Fed did well "on average," Regan and Gergen once wanted a bit more M1, but the President thought one weekly number was too big. Whatever this is, it is not a policy. We don't even know what the Fed is going to do from one week to the next, or what it is trying to do and how it intends to do it. There must be a credible long-term plan to maintain the purchasing power of the dollar over decades. That has always been an implicit promise of Reaganomics, and has always been a central plank of classical supply-side economics.

My monetarist friends claim to have a few more technical adjustments, or a secret plan, that will do the job. Yet they have been saying that for a decade since Nixon, on their advice, ended the last institutional guarantees of the quality of money. Those of us with three-year 15-percent mortgages are growing impatient. Let us take a look at *any* concrete monetary reform. If the plan shows promise, long-term interest rates will drop like a stone. If those rates do not drop, monetary policy remains a failure, and a new approach must be tried.

The nation and the world are adrift without a monetary anchor, without a durable unit of account. There has been a fundamental loss of confidence in managed money, and there is not likely to be a managerial solution. The only thing that has ever worked is guaranteeing to convert dollars into gold at a known price, adjusting policy levers to make that promise stick. I am often told that "gold is not the answer," but those who seem most certain about that have not yet asked the right questions. □

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James Nuechterlein

THE LIBERAL WORLD CONFRONTS THE REAGAN ERA

After a year in the political wilderness, liberals remain bewildered.

To understand the reaction of the American Left to the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, one must begin with the shock his election brought to the liberal community's sense of the rightness of things. The ascendancy of the new Administration, together with the resurgence of the Republican party in Congress, disturbed the natural workings of the political universe. These were not tame Republicans, fresh from the latest Ripon Society workshops in moderation. These were instead counterrevolutionaries, men (and a few women) in fundamental disagreement with the liberal world view. One has to realize that many liberals genuinely cannot understand a political perspective that departs significantly from liberal assumptions. When they encounter such a phenomenon, they can only attribute it to invincible ignorance (or to some preternatural evil force). Assuming that intelligent and informed people of decent intentions *must* be liberal, they are truly perplexed when they come across individuals who are neither stupid nor ignorant nor malicious, yet who do not share their politics. Liberalism has for so long dominated American political thought, that it has been less an argument than an assumption.

Or it was, that is, until quite recently. The unexamined hegemony of liberalism over the post-New Deal American mind first came under challenge from the Left. The war in Vietnam, combined with a suddenly inflamed sense of racial injustice, created anti-establishment discontents, but for the first time in American history, the establishment under siege was perceived as liberal, not conservative. In the end, the radical attack on liberalism was seen as a family quarrel, with the young radicals berating their liberal elders not because the elders had been mistaken in their principles, but because they had been unwilling to follow those principles to their ultimate conclusions. Whereas those liberals who became neoconservatives saw the logic of the angry young and decided that the liberal *assumptions* might be at fault, most mainstream liberals acknowledged the charges of failure of will and so reacted with predictable guilt and self-hatred. Thus the "we have failed" syndrome—failure signifying not that liberalism had been found wanting, but only that it had not been rigorously enough pursued. The essential premises of American liberals remained unexamined.

No sooner had the radical challenge collapsed under the weight of its own excesses and absurdities than liberalism was faced with an assault from the Right. Conservatives and neoconservatives (who have their own differences) have been engaged in nothing less than a thoroughgoing disenthrallment from the dominant liberal categories for perceiving political, social, cultural, and intellectual reality. While it is understandable, if regrettable, to liberals that they must occasionally endure a season in political opposition, it is quite literally inconceivable to them that they should not continue to determine the parameters of social and intellectual conventions.

It is the root-and-branch nature of today's challenge to liberalism that differentiates it from the conservatism of the 1950s with which it is occasionally compared. True, the Eisenhower era was a time of general conservatism (which no doubt accounts for the glow of nostalgic approval that now surrounds it, even though just a few years ago, under a different dispensation, the fifties drew only disparaging references to their "blandness" and "conformity"). Eisenhower's style of governing, however, was entirely different from Reagan's. Ike was a manager, a conciliator, a preserver of the status quo; if he did little to extend the New Deal, neither did he attempt to dismantle it. He domesticated, and thereby legitimated, the interventionist state. Reagan resembles Eisenhower in his method of administration but hardly at all in his philosophy of government. He does not want to preserve—he wants to turn things around. Eisenhower defeated the Taft Republicans; Reagan *is* a Taft Republican (but with Eisenhower charm).

But Ike's victory in 1952 had virtually no effect on the reigning assumptions of the general political culture. American intellectual/cultural life in the fifties remained securely liberal, even if the liberalism of the decade was rather less flamboyant than it had been in the New Deal/Fair Deal years. There was a brief flurry of interest in something called the New Conservatism, but it had no discernible impact on the thought of the time, in part because its adherents (men like Peter Viereck and Clinton Rossiter) were so polite, not to say timid, in their disagreements with liberalism, that few people noticed that a debate was under way. Those in the fifties who were unmistakably conservative never managed to break into the political/intellectual exchange; they were simply dis-

James Nuechterlein is editor of the Cresset *and Associate Professor of American Studies at Valparaiso University.*

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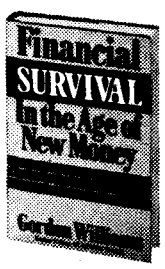

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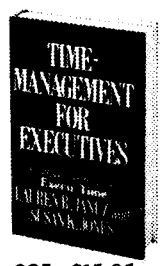

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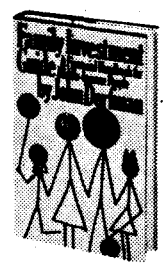

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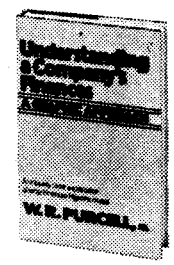

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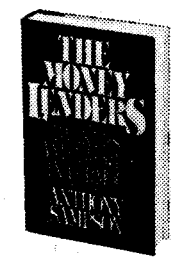

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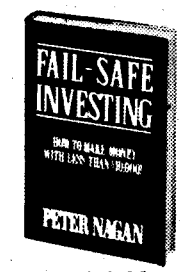

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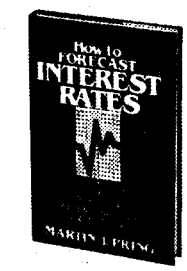

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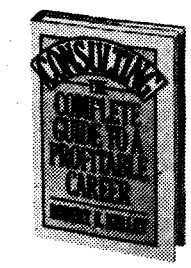

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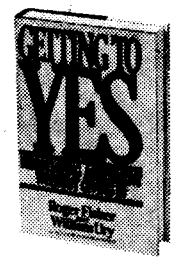

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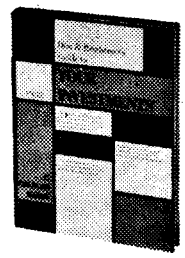

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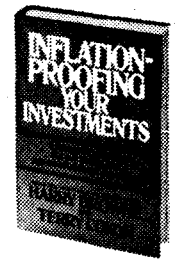

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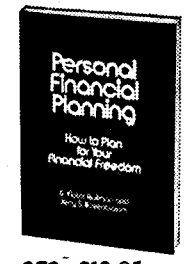

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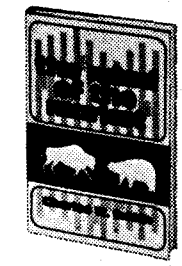

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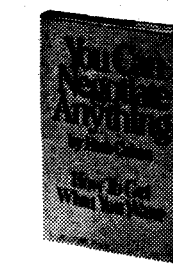

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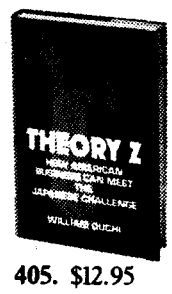

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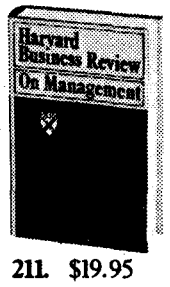

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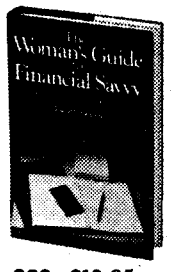

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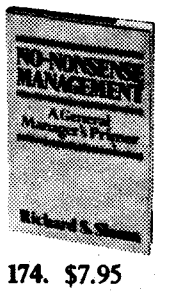

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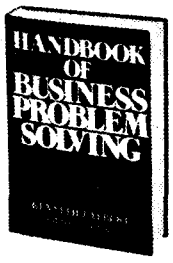

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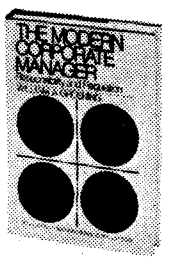

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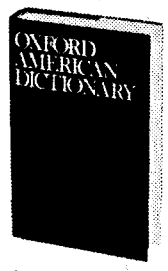

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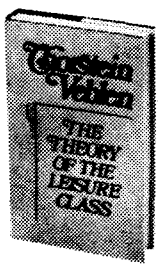

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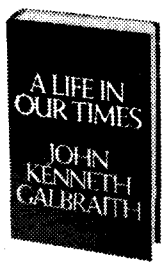

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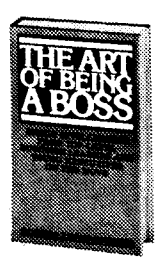

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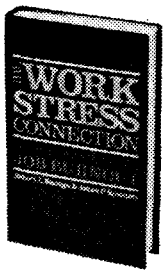

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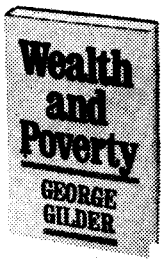

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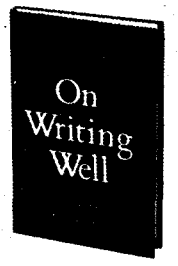

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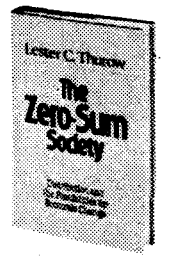

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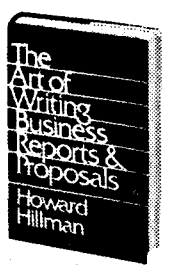

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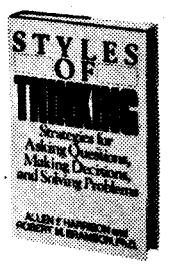

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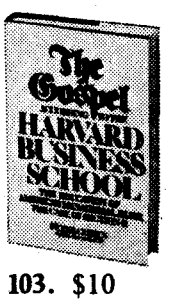

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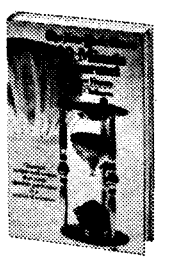

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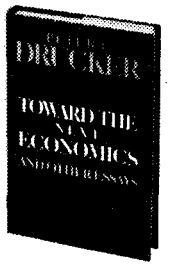

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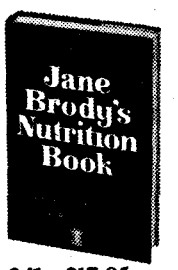

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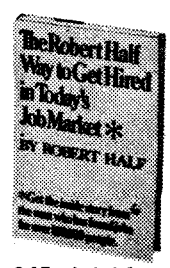

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missed as ideologues and fanatics, as in fact not a few of them were. In any case, it made little difference what they said or how they said it: The culture was not prepared to listen.

Today things are entirely different. The political disarray of the Left has left it intellectually vulnerable in a way unimaginable a decade ago. Liberals still control the commanding heights of the battlefield of ideas, but they no longer have the field to themselves. Conservatives and neoconservatives appear more confident and less defensive than at any time in modern American memory. They have broken with the liberal mystique and found their own voices. They speak with a sophistication quite astonishing to those who have until recently known conservatism as an intellectual embarrassment. By contrast, liberalism as a system of ideas is under attack as never before, and many liberals themselves concede that they have not only lost the intellectual initiative but have run dry. Their political incompetence, it seems clear, derives directly from their having run out of ideas. If it would be excessive to argue that liberals today constitute the stupid party, it would not be too much to suggest that they are not a very interesting one.

The Left has not even learned how to react to Ronald Reagan. As astonishing as it seems, liberals have not yet got over their habit of underestimating the man. Perhaps they are victims of their own propaganda. The notion of Reagan as an amiable (but dangerous) boob has for so long been a staple of liberal discourse that liberals seem themselves to have been taken in by it. But even the slowest-learning liberal should have caught on by now that Reagan is the most extraordinary political figure of modern American history. He is no intellectual, but he has unmatched political gifts and charm. (One recalls Oliver Wendell Holmes's summary judgment after meeting FDR: "second-class intellect, first-class temperament.") Liberals who had conceded Reagan's ability to influence the general public watched in amazement as he extended this persuasiveness to Congress in a series of legislative victories that should provide political scientists with enough case studies of presidential leadership to fill textbooks for a generation to come.

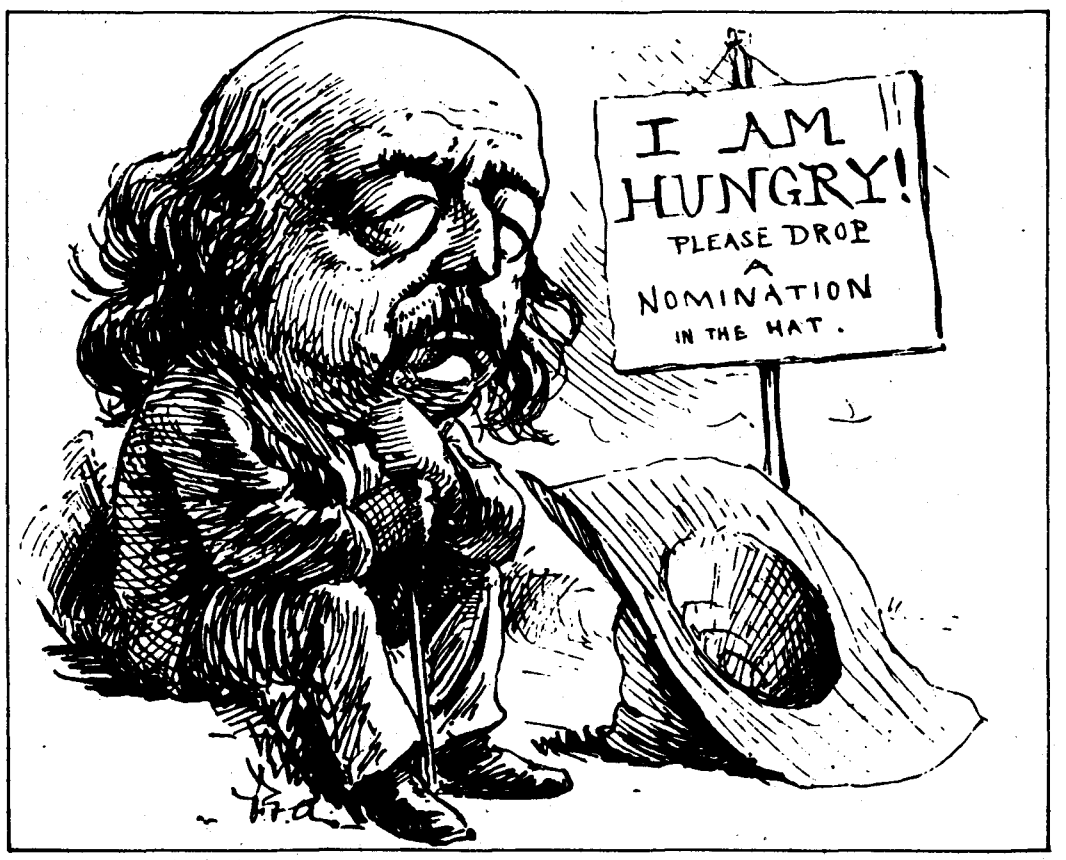
Reagan is also lucky, even in misfortune. The man who came through the assassination attempt last March with so much wit, courage, and simple decency could hardly be the mindless, uncaring lightweight of liberal mythology. Even the liberals seemed impressed, despite their best efforts not to be. The immediate rush of public sympathy has long since worn off, but there remains a legacy of heightened respect that will work for him for the rest of his Presidency. Even those who most hate his politics find it hard to dislike the man, and Reagan's undogmatic manner makes this most doctrinaire of Presidents appear less ideological than in fact he is.

Reagan's skills and popularity aside, the liberal community has suffered most from its own confusions and its inability to provide plausible alternatives to the President's programs. Liberal politicians, closer and more sensitive to public opinion than are liberal intellectuals, have been the most restrained and frustrated of Reagan's opponents. They understand the depth of public alienation from the liberalism of the past decade.

Knowing this, Democratic party leaders have found it difficult to construct an effective, or even coherent, opposition to Republican conservatism. Forced to acknowledge (with varying degrees of openness) widespread disaffection from liberal policies, liberal politicians have reacted to Administration initiatives with little more than obfuscation and negativism, and thus have fallen into the "me too, but better" trap that hindered Republicans for so many years.

And so liberal Democrats find themselves insisting that they are as committed as is the Administration to cutting taxes, reducing the role of government, building a stronger defense, rejuvenating the private sector, and upholding traditional values relating to family, work, and church. But all this must be accomplished, it turns out, without anything really changing and with no group or individual having to sacrifice any existing advantage. Liberals, for example, berate conservatives for their heartlessness in cutting social benefits at the same time that they outdo the traditional Right in their alarms over projected budget deficits. Or they insist on the need for new investment incentives but demand that well-to-do taxpayers (who do the investing) receive no tax benefits. These contradictions—they could be expanded indefinitely—add up to what might be termed supply-side populism, a program of political economy that is all benefit and no cost, all desire and no discipline, all wish and no reality.

As in economic policy, so everywhere else. Liberals want to increase military strength but reduce military spending, restore America's position in the world but not endanger détente, encourage equality of opportunity but retain racial and sexual quotas, support traditional values but champion unrestricted individual liberation and self-expression. It comes down to a style of politics that denies the necessity of choice.



The liberal reluctance to decide among priorities reflects a situation in which one political world is dead (though still longed for) and no new one has arisen to take its place. We hear endless appeals for a "new liberalism," yet the prescriptions for the new order remain so vague that we cannot be sure just what is intended. To listen to a speech by, say, Walter Mondale is to observe a man at war with himself. The new liberal in Mondale recognizes that government, trying to do too much, has done nothing very well, and that social progress requires reinvigoration of the private sector; the old liberal in him still looks to government to preserve that egalitarian version of social justice to which he remains committed.

Unable to generate positive initiatives, Mondale and his cohorts have settled on fear as their best weapon. Liberal fund-raising letters these days indicate little of what the Left's restoration to office might mean. Nor do they spend much time discussing the actual deeds of the Reagan Administration. A great deal is said,

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however, of the horrendous things in store if the marauding forces of the "radical right" are not soon removed from power. One gets a bleak picture of an America at the brink of catastrophe. Better a bumbling liberalism, these messages suggest, than a determined conservatism.

This exploitation of fear corresponds to liberalism's basic strategy: Wait for disaster. For the Left today, worse is better; indeed, it's about all there is. The overriding political issue remains the economy, and liberals, with nothing to suggest, have little to do but sit back and hope that the opposition does itself in. Born of the Great Depression, the liberal political economy has focused on the Keynesian emphasis on stimulation of demand as the heart of its program, and liberals have shown themselves incapable of dealing with contemporary inflationary pressures. They wait for things to deteriorate not simply out of political expedience, but also out of a sense that their customary prescriptions can apply only to an economy wracked by deflation.

But the matter is still more complicated. A prosperous capitalist economy is one that, for liberals, is always in danger of losing its political and moral soul. If capitalism works too well, it dulls the appetite for liberal reform. It leaves people content with diverse, non-public leadership and insufficiently critical of the moral workings of society. From the liberal perspective, an America in (non-inflationary) economic trouble is more likely to recognize its enemies—the capitalist elite—and more inclined to demand the kind of redistributive and regulatory governmental activism that liberals identify with social health. Liberals would therefore object to the Reaganite vision of minimal government even if they thought it could sustain economic prosperity. A vigorous public sector needs no economic justification. Pluralistic voluntarism dispenses with the centralized direction that alone captures the moral imagination of the Left. All of which explains why the new liberalism remains so insubstantial: The Left's moral allegiance still resides with the old liberalism.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the Left can challenge the Reagan Administration with little other than moralism. Mainstream Protestant Christianity is a case in point. The National Council of Churches, which has long since lost interest in personal behavior, could wait no more than thirty days beyond the Inaugural to issue its first denunciation of the moral callousness of the Reagan Administration. Moral behavior, they insist, is to be understood entirely in public and collective terms. To be moral is to hold correct political opinions. What does or does not work plays no part in moral calculations. The Reagan Administration came under attack without regard to the effects of its policies on people's lives (the critiques, of course, came before anyone could know what those effects would be); it was enough, apparently, that the Administration's concern for the poor and disadvantaged did not follow the prescriptions of collectivist liberalism.

That the establishment churches have turned themselves into adjuncts of the Left makes less political difference than might be expected. On this matter, the NCC is preaching to empty pews. Most of the communicants of the mainline churches have learned to ignore those churchmen who forsake transcendence for political evangelizing, and whose moral earnestness (and economic and political ignorance) has shielded them from social reality. In a sense, these church leaders have been the last ones to get the message of the decline of liberalism.

Even those of us who have concluded that liberalism is an unserious way of perceiving the world might wish that it were less feckless. One does not have to share the Left's fantasy that the Administration is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the radical Right to concede that Reaganism would benefit from an intelligent and responsible opposition. Some of the people around the President—though not, apparently, his closest advisers—encourage the tendency to ideological rigidity that Mr. Reagan has occasionally displayed in the past. If the Reagan Administration finally fails—and there is no indication that it will—it will be because the true believers have triumphed over the political realists. The Administration's continuing temptation will be to assume that the failures of liberalism require an overnight transformation of American society. This is a temptation that conservatives, of all people, should know how to resist.

It now seems that it is to neoconservatism, rather than liberalism, that the Administration will have to look for perceptive criticism. The liberal community's critiques of the President's policies have been superficial when not simply demagogic. If the egregious Norman Lear and his People for the American Way (savor that name) continue to typify liberal understanding of America today, there will be no reason for the White House to pay any attention to what the Left has to say. The most damning of all judgments on contemporary liberalism is that, having been forced from power because of its bankrupt ideas and policies, it has not even the resources to mount a worthy opposition. There's ironic justice here, but also reason for concern—and even some regret. □

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PRESSWATCH

KICKING AROUND REAGAN

by Fred Barnes

Brace yourself. This is going to run counter to a habit of thinking that conservatives have understandably developed over the past two decades, namely that the national press corps is brimming with liberal reporters who unfailingly provide brutal and unfair coverage of conservative politicians. True, there are many who tilt to the Left and are eager to excoriate conservatives. But—and this is the part that may be hard to swallow—the press has been reasonably fair in its reporting on Ronald Reagan. Edwin Meese III has been savaged, Richard V. Allen pilloried, supply-side economics ridiculed, budget cuts sensationalized, tax reduction misconstrued, tough talk on El Salvador derided, relaxation of regulations denigrated, retreat from affirmative action assailed, and Nancy Reagan debunked. Ronald Reagan has suffered little of this flagellation: Since he got to the White House, indeed from the time he defeated Jimmy Carter, Reagan has been treated with remarkable gentleness.

There are reasons for this. One is Reagan's personality. Reporters are no more immune than anyone else to his amiability, and it's no fun drawing and quartering a nice fellow. Another is his legislative success. Journalists have been grumbling in print for years about Presidents who couldn't "get along" with Congress. Now comes a President who is able to turn Congress into a lap dog, for a while at least. Even on as questionable a proposal as the sale of AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia, this President wins. It's hard to belittle success, even if the man producing it is a conservative.

And there is a final reason: Ronald Reagan isn't Jimmy Carter. With Carter's exile to Plains, it's easy to forget the intense animosity that the Washington press corps felt toward him. Carter was faulted for being an illegitimate liberal, a failure at both policymaking and managing the government, and an introvert with a low opinion of reporters' motives. As early as Carter's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1976, his more perceptive aides saw a rift widening between Carter and the press. It never narrowed. By the 1980 election, the rift had become a chasm. Were it not for this, Reagan might have been confronted with a far more critical press during the campaign. Instead, for this election, the conservative candidate toward whom many reporters felt ideological revulsion got fair coverage—fairer in fact than that given to Carter. And some of that kindly feeling has endured with Reagan in the White House.

Smiles and warmth between Reagan and reporters do not constitute fair coverage, however. What does is the balanced treatment Reagan has received in cold-blooded assessments of his Presidency. David S. Broder of the *Washington Post,* the nation's most respected political correspondent, criticized Reagan for sometimes projecting "moral meanness" during his first year in office. But he gave Reagan credit for great accomplishments. "In his first 12 months in office, Ronald Reagan steered through Congress an economic program reversing 50 years of previous history and the handiwork of two historically giant predecessors, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson," Broder wrote in January. "He did it without the full partisan control of Congress that they enjoyed and in the face of stubborn claims that he had no mandate from the voters for any such course. He did it by being a man of conviction, courage and steadfastness—the very qualities he showed so clearly in the aftermath of the attempt on his life."

From a slightly different perspective came the verdict on Reagan pronounced last December by liberal columnist Mark Shields. "In spite of [his] shortcomings, Reagan deserves credit for demonstrating conclusively that he has a sense of humor, a sense of theater and sense of self," Shields wrote. "He is the first elected president since 1963 who has not been threatened by the ghost of John Kennedy and who could gracefully and graciously preside over a White House ceremony to the memory of Robert Kennedy. He does not seek to impress with his long hours in the office or by leaking how many biographies of junior-varsity British generals he has read in one week . . . Reagan does not deny responsibility for his economic program. He seeks responsibility, and he promises differences. In less than a year, in this very important respect, Ronald Reagan has redefined the presidency in the words of President Kennedy as 'the vital center of action in our whole scheme of government.'"

The most remarkable aspect of the Broder and Shields critiques was that Reagan was taken seriously as an ideological force, not just as an actor who happens to have transmuted his Hollywood talents into political skills. Broder and Shields are not alone. Rowland Evans and Robert Novak have made the same point repeatedly in their columns. Now that might be dismissed on the ground that they are conservatives, Reagan partisans. But what about Elizabeth Drew? In the *New Yorker,* hardly a pro-Reagan sheet, she wrote last month an analysis of Reagan and his Administration that was breathtaking in its acuity and fairness:

> In the midst of all this [turmoil] sits a serene President. He is confident enough in his views and secure enough within himself not to worry. He may seem vague on policy at times, he often seems to play a passive role, and he may not concern himself with details, but he has set a clear course for his Administration. The Reagan Administration has been ideological across the board: on economic and foreign policy, on the environment, and on regulations governing the Central Intelligence Agency. Sometimes it goes too far even for its own party, and is forced to pull back. Its inclination is not to engage in problem-solving—problem-solving is boring—but to take a doctrinal position and slam away. It does not display much interest in the tedious business of governing—of maintaining the morale of the federal establishment and making the whole thing go. Like Presidents before him, Reagan has continued to run against the government he heads. But there is a difference of degree: if one does not much believe in government, one isn't very much inclined to try to make it work.
>
> . . . Reagan is acknowledged to have a better sense than anyone around him of

Fred Barnes is National Political Reporter for the Baltimore Sun.

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how to couch an issue in simple terms that will appeal to the public, and a sure sense of how an audience will react—capacities he demonstrated during his campaign for the Presidency. As he did in the campaign, he shows a talent for choosing his ground and turning situations to his advantage. The amiability that he demonstrated then made the hard things he was saying go down more easily. The amiability and the serenity are part of Reagan's public appeal. But ideologues tend to have a combative nature, and anyone who doesn't realize that Reagan is combative doesn't understand him yet. He does not transmit the angry combativeness of, say, a James Watt (whom Reagan is said to admire) or the humorless dogmatism of his sister across the sea, Margaret Thatcher . . . Reagan's persona serves him well: he is the ideological combatant with a pleasing, Johnny Carson style.

The Drew piece, which was reflective of the general drift of thinking about the President among political journalists, suggested that the old practice of misperceiving Reagan—and often underestimating him—has come to an abrupt halt. It hasn't. Being seen as an even-tempered man with subtle political abilities puts Reagan in a higher category than Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford or Richard Nixon or Lyndon Johnson. But the canards about Reagan persist, partly because there is a degree of truth to each of them. By my count, there are four canards with real resilience:

(1) *Reagan the Great Communicator.* There's no denying that Reagan is good on television. He knows how to use what Carl P. Leubsdorf of the *Dallas Morning News* called his "impressive persuasive powers." But there are limits, and the press is erratic in recognizing them. Reagan is deft at delivering a set speech, the well-rehearsed and carefully worded address that bristles with populist phrases and riveting stories. Some of his TV speeches, like the one last September pleading for new budget cuts, scarcely touched off a blip in public opinion, though. And he is awful at press conferences, which is why he has so few and those are in the afternoon, not prime time. Nor is he at his best in impromptu encounters with reporters, such as this one in January as he boarded his helicopter for Camp David:

Question—What about Meese?
Q—What about unemployment?
Q—Meese.
Q—What about the unemployment situation?
Q—What do you have against Mr. Meese? Why are you trying to ride him out?
Reagan—What?
Q—Unemployment.
Q—Meese.
Q—Take your choice.
Reagan—We'll take that one from Meese.
Q—Meese.
Reagan—That is an entire invention that has never been heard of and there is not one shred of truth in it.
Q—What is whole cloth?
Reagan—What?
Q—What is whole cloth anyway?
Reagan—The older generation knows that as an expression for falsehood.

Can this be the same guy ballyhooed by political writer Sidney Blumenthal in the *New York Times Magazine* last September as the country's Communicator in Chief? Blumenthal put a faintly sinister cast on Reagan's speechifying. "Ronald Reagan is governing America by a new strategic doctrine—the permanent campaign," he wrote ominously. "He is applying in the White House the same techniques he employed in getting there. Making more effective use of media and market research than any previous President, he has brought into the White House the most sophisticated team of pollsters, media masters and tacticians ever to work there. They have helped him to transcend entrenched institutions like the Congress and the Washington press corps to appeal directly to the people." Blumenthal, awestruck by new political techniques, doesn't mention that Carter, Ford, and Nixon hired similar flocks of political marketeers, all to no avail.

(2) *Reagan as the Conventional Pol.* James Reston of the *New York Times* has condescendingly propagated this one, as have some conservative polemicists disturbed by lapses in Reagan's ideology. If Reagan has a political ideology, Reston hasn't been notified of it yet. "One of the reassuring things about President Reagan is that he is not a prisoner of his campaign rhetoric or even of his early decisions on foreign or economic policy," Reston wrote last December. ". . . The President is criticized for this amiable indifference, but it may be our hope for the next three years of his Presidency. He can switch and doesn't mind switching." Oh, Yeah? Try to cajole Reagan into delaying the individual income tax cuts he enacted or into lopping off a sizeable chunk of the increase in defense spending. Good luck.

But there is a dollop of truth in the perception of Reagan as a political regular, a Republican first and a conservative second. He seems satisfied, following the departure of Richard Allen and Lyn Nofziger, with a White House staff that Lee Lescaze of the *Washington Post* described as sporting "distinctly non-conservative coloring." The President, groused conservative columnist M. Stanton Evans, "is close to being captured by moderate Republicans who opposed his presidential aspirations."

(3) *Reagan as Racist.* This characterization, long brewing, broke into the open after Reagan barred the Internal Revenue Service from denying tax exemptions to segregated private schools. It was hedged. William Raspberry, the respected columnist for the *Washington Post,* said the decision was "racist in effect." After a telephone call from the President, Raspberry wrote that he "had not called him a racist, for the simple reason that I don't think he is one." But Raspberry stuck by his label for the tax-exemption policy. Carl T. Rowan, the columnist and television commentator, was tougher still on Reagan. He "either wants racism and shameful discrimination revived in America, or he is pitiably naive about what goes on around him," Rowan wrote. ". . . The terrible reality is that his administration encourages, subsidizes and defends racism. How can this president denounce 'any semblance of racism' while his aides perpetrate policies and rulings that are the most racist of any federal administration since that of Woodrow Wilson?"

(4) *Reagan as Figurehead. Newsweek* gave this notion respectability, noting last September that Reagan's work habits give the appearance of "a disengaged presidency." The evidence for it was "his apparent unfamiliarity with some issues before him, his reliance on aides and campaign-style cue cards in dealing with congressional power brokers and foreign leaders." When the flap over tax breaks for segregated schools erupted in January, *Newsweek* claimed the controversy "fed the lingering suspicion that Reagan is out of touch with his own policymaking apparatus."

That suspicion lingered in some unexpected places. The ever-supportive *Wall Street Journal* editorialized on Reagan's first anniversary in office on his "failure to take hold of the enterprise he heads. We doubt that he will be able to accomplish his goals, and indeed worry that he may be ground down into Carter-like impotence, unless he comes to grips with what any competent executive would quickly recognize as critical problems of management structure."

Management problems are one thing, but "disengaged"? That doesn't fit too comfortably with the view of Reagan as a President of great ideological intensity; the two are incompatible. The *Economist,* the British newsmagazine, explained last

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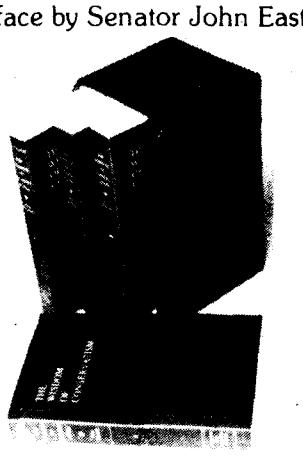

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December that Reagan is misunderstood if judged by his five hours a week of official meetings. "Outside his allotted five hours, Mr. Reagan is not simply reading *Variety*. He is his administration's best salesman and spends much of his time lobbying. His aides operate freely in his name and often forget even that they are doing that. Yet there is no hint from them that they consider themselves the ventriloquists and Mr. Reagan the dummy. . . . The members of his staff are Mr. Reagan's creatures, not he theirs." And that says it quite well.

Sad to say, there is a downside to the fairness in the coverage of Reagan. It has claimed a victim, Nancy Reagan. Unable to lay a glove on the President, or at least unable to get in a good punch, the press has gone after Mrs. Reagan with a vengeance, criticizing her for haughtiness, a lack of social conscience, and lavish personal spending. It smacks of a backhanded effort to attack Reagan himself, and I am told this is precisely the way he interprets the rough treatment of his wife. The most critical piece was a *Newsweek* cover story last December which, while scrupulously accurate in all details, held Mrs. Reagan to a standard normally reserved for office-seekers alone, not their wives. Not surprisingly, she didn't measure up. The criticism was considerably harsher than Rosalynn Carter experienced, even after the 1979 episode when she repeatedly interrupted her husband and provided her own answers to reporters' questions. But the situation was different with Mrs. Carter. Reporters then had her husband to kick around. □

THE NATION'S PULSE

REFLECTIONS IN A SILICON EYE

by Hugh Kenner

Douglas R. Hofstadter (b. 1945) emerged from academe into visibility three years ago, when his *Gödel, Escher, Bach* became a campus bestseller (at $18.50!) en route to a well-deserved Pulitzer. For a large though special public he continues to be gratifyingly visible. *Scientific American* has just finished phasing him in as successor to Martin Gardner, whose "Mathematical Games" was for twenty years the main reason many people bought the magazine.

Gardner, no mathematician at all and puckishly proud of it, delighted in card tricks, magic squares, the *Oz* books, and the conceptual regularities he could smoke out of such boyish pleasures; his mailbag, abulge with offerings from the most playful (= creative) mathematicians in several countries, was what earned many a Gardner column citation in austere bibliographies.

Hofstadter, an accredited scientist with a Ph.D. in solid state physics and an associate professorship (computer science) at Indiana University, has been quietly moving "Mathematical Games" to a different turf altogether. The column that appears under his byline as "Metamagical Themas," an adroit rearrangement of its predecessor's letters, tends like its author to be preoccupied with *self-referentiality*, a catchall theme that can seem infuriatingly cute until you begin to glimpse its ramifications.

Example: "You have just begun reading the sentence you have just finished reading."

That sentence makes no sense at all until you permit it to be about itself.

Example: "The number 2 appears in this sentence 2 times."

So it does; but observe that it wouldn't appear 2 times if it weren't *saying* it appears 2 times.

Example (grossly oversimplified): The DNA code whereby you and I are something more than discoursing dolls is a set of rules for making replicas of itself. We are made of "trillions of self-referential molecules."

Example: self-consciousness. There's the rub. What's a self? What's consciousness? Is "consciousness" perhaps just *lots* of smarts? Need it only be instantiated in cells? Why not in silicon? What peeked through *Gödel, Escher, Bach* and dominates the new book* Hofstadter has co-edited with philosopher Daniel Dennett is a set of propositions we may paraphrase as follows:

(1) Systems, such as the trick sentences above, may refer to (discuss,—contemplate?—) themselves.

(1b) *Example:* We are systems and we are self-conscious.

(2) Manmade systems can refer to themselves.

(2b) *Inference:* A sufficiently intricate manmade system can resemble you and me. "Minds exist in brains and may come to exist in programmed machines," say Hofstadter flatly; and mishaps "may" hedges against are technical not philosophical.

This means that Artificial Intelligence, since the 1960s the White Whale of innumerable research grants, is feasible in theory; moreover, that *once attained in practice it will deserve to be called Intelligence,* not simply a knack for following instructions rapidly.

Here someone will generally assert that computers can only do what they are told. This assertion is in Hofstadter's judgment a copout. (Consider that any neuron in your brain can only do what an adjacent neuron has told it to.)

Before we go on we had better document our numbered propositions. (1) is best illustrated by the logician Kurt Gödel's 1931 proof of the incompleteness of all logically consistent systems, where the mechanism of the proof depends on making the system refer to itself. (For a crisply playful approach see Raymond Smullyan's *What is the Name of this Book?* 1978, ch. 16.)

(1a) gives no apparent trouble, since if you're not self-conscious you're not reading this but occupying space in a home for the dim. (But note the adjoining premise that you are a system; whether this is true in the strict sense logicians accord the word "system" may be another question entirely.)

(2), the self-referentiality of manmade systems, is demonstrated by numerous computer programs which consult themselves and then modify themselves on finding reason to

Hugh Kenner teaches various things at the Johns Hopkins University.

**The Mind's I*, Basic Books, $15.50.

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disapprove what they see. Lyndon Johnson did less.

So we're back at (2a), the claim that self-reference in a manmade system sufficiently intricate could deserve to be called self-consciousness. This stirs old questions, "What is self?" "What constitutes 'I'?" and in the new Hofstadter-Dennett book, *The Mind's I,* there are 27 pieces by 18 contributors that prod at such questions as though they had just now been asked. Their tools are improvised, and historically grounded philosophers may think of clever men trying to open an oyster with toothpicks. The computer, if only as metaphor, is omnipresent; these "Fantasies and Reflections on Self and Soul" are reflected in its silicon eye.

Any book, though, leads from strength when it can commence with an enigma by Jorge Louis Borges and move rapidly to the late A.M. Turing's classic "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," a candidate for anyone's list of the twentieth century's most fascinating dozen pages. If the Spanish text of the Borges doesn't predate it, Turing's is the oldest contribution in the book, and it's only 32 years young. Conceived in the dawn of the computer age, it has remained the classic way to examine the question, whether machines that can think are thinkable, and wonderful though it is for wit and concision, any Bible that uses it as a Book of Genesis is already committed to the Silicon God.

Tacitly dismissing much precedent Western thought as primitive or else theological, Turing in effect bypassed the tempting question, what it is we do when *we* think. Whether the envisaged machine did the same kind of thing he professed not to care at all; what mattered was whether it could make someone *think* it was thinking. To that end he proposed the Turing Test. Put a skeptic in one room, put a machine and a human in another. Let them both communicate with the skeptic via screen and keyboard. Let each strenuously claim to be human. And let the skeptic decide, if he can, which is which.

Turing offered some sample dialogue:

Q: Please write me a sonnet on the subject of the Forth Bridge.
A: Count me out on this one. I never could write poetry.
Q: Add 34957 to 70764.
A: (Pause about 30 seconds and then give as answer) 105621.
Q: Do you play chess?
A: Yes.
Q: I have K at my K1, and no other pieces. You have only K at K6 and R at R1. It is your move. What do you play?
A: (After a pause of 15 seconds) R-R8 mate.

Turing was a witty fellow. How many of his readers have noticed that by way of showing it was human the machine got its addition wrong?

Turing estimated in 1950 that by A.D. 2000, machines could be programmed so well an average interrogator would "not have more than 70 percent chance of making the right identification after five minutes of questioning." By 1968 the following had happened:

VP (the vice-president of a software firm): Do you think that I can use the computer this morning?
TELETYPE: Why do you ask?
VP: I might be able to make some additional telecomp sales.
TELETYPE: Why aren't you sure?
VP: My prospective customers have never seen a demonstration of the system.
TELETYPE: Does this mean very much to you?
VP: Of course it does.
TELETYPE: You seem very positive about that.
VP: This is ridiculous.
TELETYPE: What do you mean this is ridiculous?
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The VP had thought he was in touch with a programmer named Bobrow. He was actually typing to a program named ELIZA. When he finally rang up Bobrow and asked, "Why are you being so snotty to me?" Bobrow chanced to answer in exactly the idiom of the program: "What do you mean why am I being snotty to you?" They were some time straightening it out.

Was Turing's Test met that morning? Probably not. The skeptic in Turing's Test knows he may be dealing with a machine, whereas the VP had been sure he was dealing with Bobrow. People find what they think they will find.

I cite the VP-ELIZA dialogue from Pamela McCorduck's breezy *Machines Who Think* (1979), not from *The Mind's I* where this ingenious program gets no more than passing mention (three index references, two of them erroneous). Though its ability to make hollow but acceptable conversation has been impressing newcomers since 1965, ELIZA is little pointed to in the Artificial Intelligence fraternity. Partly, they'd not have you think it's the best they can do. Nor can they wholly forget that ELIZA's author, Joseph Weizenbaum, has abjured the faith: indeed, recoiled in horror from the idea that anyone could see his creation as more than an interesting toy.

True, the program is shallow however ingenious. ELIZA, you may have noticed, follows, never leads; ELIZA in fact explicitly simulates a Rogerian or non-directive psychotherapist who spends the hour uttering variations on "Why do you say that?" and "Tell me more." Weizenbaum had cunningly defined a role in which his silicon know-nothing could sound plausible; "The psychiatric interview," he wrote, "is one of the few examples of . . . communication in which one of the participating pair is free to assume the pose of knowing almost nothing of the real world." There was danger, he conceded in passing, that the example might "run away with what it is supposed to illustrate."

Alas, the very year ELIZA was announced a kosher shrink named Colby told readers of the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* that the fine new program was just what the doctor ordered, not least for an overworked doctor, and before long frantic souls were pleading with Weizenbaum for a little time with ELIZA to straighten themselves out. His response was *Computer Power and Human Reason* (1976), a book evidently written by a kinsman of Jeremiah's and a sour look indeed at anyone's inclination to delegate judgment to mechanized systems of rules.

An eye still more cold was cast by the philosopher Hubert Dreyfus, whose 1972 *What Computers Can't Do* (second edition, 1979) came down hard on, among other things, any hope that a disembodied "brain" might emulate decades-long experience of knowing the world's variousness through the senses of a mobile body. Dreyfus held in special scorn the Artificers' way of spinning grandiose predictions off small successes, a habit he likened to claiming you were nearer the moon for having climbed a tree.

Weizenbaum's moral tract being easier to allow for, the Dreyfus book is the one rigorous enthusiasts should defang if they can, and it's instructive that Hofstadter doesn't really try. A note in *The Mind's I* calls *What Computers Can't Do* "the most sustained and detailed criticism of the methods and presuppositions of the field," which is true but tends to suggest it's no dragon really, while the bibliography to *Gödel, Escher, Bach* says "Interesting to try to refute. . . . It is important to have people like Dreyfus around, even if you find them very irritating." Elsewhere in *Gödel, Escher, Bach* (p. 574), the only other mention of Dreyfus lists him among subscribers to a composite thesis at which I've heard Dreyfus snort.

The one critic Hofstadter and Dennett do attempt to refute is John R. Searle, whose "Minds, Brains and Programs" in effect denies that passing the Turing Test however triumphantly would entail the machine's ability to think. Searle proposed a "Chinese thought experiment" in which (the details are intricate) he'd give answers in Chinese to questions in Chinese about Chinese texts, knowing no Chinese at all but guided by a set of conversion rules ("program") written in English. With practice and a good enough set of rules, he might score 100 percent while understanding nothing; and nothing was exactly what a machine would understand as it breezed through Turing's and similar tests, glib about matters it was treating as so much Chinese.

What Searle claims is that programs however intricate can never hope to go deeper than ELIZA does. Though ELIZA understands nothing of what you say, it is deft at purely grammatical transformations, letting the keyword "like," for instance, cue it to answer "You are like my father in some ways" with "What resemblance do you see?" or parrying "You are afraid of me" with "Does it please you to believe I am afraid of you?" Its secret, Hofstadter rightly remarks, is little more than "A shrewd mixture of bravado and bluffing."

Ah but, says Searle, it is conceivable that you could remain wholly outside a subject (e.g., Chinese poetry) while not bouncing remarks off it like ELIZA but discoursing at a seemingly expert level, provided only you had enough rules of procedure. That would be highly sophisticated performance, not at all bravado and bluffing, yet it would not be *understanding*. Everyone who has set examinations knows about the student who grasps little but tests well, and we've all met straight-A medicos we'd not trust a bellyache to.

Hofstadter and Dennett rejoin that Searle's hypothetical Chinese test, though he makes it sound simple, entails a performance so inconceivably complicated the boundary between its successful execution and "understanding" disappears. Searle has us pretend *we* are executing that performance, and reminds us that we *know* we don't know Chinese. We're not bluffing either, we're following instructions, and if somebody out there chooses to read understanding of Chinese into our blind responses that's his look-out.

But would we know we didn't understand, if by some miracle of programming we could perform like that? Is such ability in fact the same thing as "understanding"?

And we're back with Turing, though confronting speculations he dodged. What would it feel like, we're invited to wonder, to be a computer that had mastered the Chinese test and could breeze through Turing's? Would it feel like anything at all? What, for that matter, does it feel like to be *you*? I'm sure *I* don't know. A dozen heady pages of *The Mind's I* have us pondering what it's like to be a bat. Little by little, that's the strategy; from one neuron whose working you can understand to your brain's complex of ten billion, which you can't; likewise from one transistor to whole hypothetical hardware hierarchies, informed by layers of programmed organization.

These are the sophisticated intellectual games of our era, their premise that the complex arises by stages from the simple. But that these stages are traceable is uncertain. I have knowledge that I am confident is knowledge, though I have no way at all of reducing it to simpler terms. It is the knowledge, for instance, that enables me to be sure that *The Pisan Cantos* is a moving, coherent work. Yet how little of this knowledge can in any way be rendered explicit! Part of it—only a part—is lexical knowledge. Part is body-knowledge: the experience of pronouncing cadenced words, the subconscious measuring of rhythm against my pulse-beat and my musculature. Part reaches back to childhood, when I first heard the name of Persephone (that "I" was a far different "I").

"Shall two know the same in their knowing?" Though the knowledges I allude to tend to get dismissed from discussion as hopelessly "subjective," I know I possess them and also know when some of my students have come to possess something like them, imparted I don't know how, mostly from the poem, if partly from me. And while I'd undertake to teach the multiplication table to anyone, I'd make no claim that just anybody at all could be awakened to *The Pisan Cantos*, or for that matter to *The Pardoner's Tale* or to *Go, Lovely Rose*.

But programming is in its infancy? Artificial Intelligence simply needs more lab time? No, I don't think so. Much that is of value to human beings seems inextricable from the experience of a lifetime, incurred over years and amid the experience of aging. I'll be as impressed as Doug Hofstadter when a program plays championship chess, and I'll still withhold the concession that it understands what it has done. And he'll wonder, no doubt, at my stubborn lack of enlightenment, much as I wonder at so fine a mind entranced with what I judge a chimerical toy.

And I don't mean the computer. I'm typing this on a computer.

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THE TALKIES

JOGGING TO THE FINLAND STATION

by Martha Bayles

During the second half of *Reds,* Warren Beatty's film tribute to John Reed, there is a sequence in which Reed travels with the Bolsheviks through White-held territory to a conference in Baku. The year is 1919, and Reed has returned to Russia after writing his eyewitness account of the Revolution, *Ten Days That Shook The World.* No longer an observer, he is now a participant, representing the Communist Workers Party of America, and taking orders from no less a personage than Grigory Zinoviev.

In a Baku mosque Reed addresses a diverse Moslem audience, his speech read in translation by three or four regional leaders. At one point a group of Azerbaijani tribesmen bursts into wild cheers. Bemused, Reed asks an English-speaking bystander for an explanation. They are cheering, he is told, because his speech has just called for "a holy war against the infidel." On the train back to Moscow, Reed learns that the translations were supervised by Zinoviev, and in outrage tells Zinoviev not to change what he writes. "I said a class war, not a holy war!" Then he gets going on the subject of free speech, only to be interrupted when White soldiers try to blow up the train.

The point of the sequence is to set up a contrast between Zinoviev, portrayed as an overbearing ideologue by novelist Jerzy Kosinski, and Beatty's warm, enthusiastic Reed—an idealist who would never stoop to manipulating people just to gain their temporary support. Because of this contrast, and the fact that the film focuses on the relationship between Reed and his wife, Louise Bryant, most of the critics have echoed Stanley Kauffmann's decree: "This is not, in essence or intent, a political work."

It is always hard to know what critics mean by "political," but in the case of *Reds* they seem to be saying that it is not Communist propaganda. As Vincent Canby puts it: "The movie is essentially as ideological as the puppy that whimpers when Louise stalks out." To a degree, he is right. Whenever a political debate or discussion occurs, there is usually something else going on in the foreground: coffee being poured, dinner being burned, Diane Keaton's mouth opening in surprise or closing in a pout—or some other Robert Altman-like distraction. Those among the moviegoing audience who believe that the mere sound of Communist rhetoric will galvanize the masses may be gratified by having it reverberate in theaters across America. But they are a small group, too busy grabbing microphones in public forums to spend much time at the movies.

A much larger part of the audience is made up of people who disapprove of such rhetoric from the lips of a Zinoviev, but enjoy the way it sounds in a Greenwich Village café or around a rustic kitchen table in Provincetown. For this large and influential group, the rhetoric is treated as a sort of sound effect. Not only placed in the background, it is also speeded up, so that it becomes not rational speech but glossolalia: meaningless in itself but proof that the spirit of authenticity and idealism has descended upon the comrades. And for those who are now over thirty but nostalgic for the sixties when they couldn't trust anyone over thirty, there is the reassuring sight of "Witnesses" such as Will Durant, Roger Baldwin, and Rebecca West—whose antique, expressive faces appear against a velvety blackness—recalling their own good old days.

Then there is a third category of moviegoers: people who do not feel nostalgic about anyone's radical youth. For them *Reds* provides the aforementioned confrontation in which Reed defends truth and individualism. It isn't much, but it gets him off the card-carrying hook. So what if he's been a bit slow in seeing the light? He sees it; and shortly thereafter becomes the honest-to-goodness American dreamer gasping on his deathbed that he wants to go home.

So the critics have a point. *Reds* is not political, if the politics in question are those of the Bolshevik Revolution. But if we consider another sort of politics, those of the box office, then Beatty as the author of this film can be seen playing a role similar to that of Zinoviev. Like the assembly in Baku, the audience for films is composed of various tribes who do not share priorities. Mobilizing them all at once requires a calculated labor of multiple translation, so that each tribe will follow the version intended for it, and miss the rest.

Genuine art presents contradictory meanings, but it modulates between them, either resolving them or deepening their irony into tragedy. This film does nothing of the kind. It simply sends out conflicting messages, assuming that the audience won't notice until it's too late. Perhaps the most glaring example of this, next to the treatment of Reed's political convictions, is the portrayal of Louise Bryant. In the glowing words of *Time:* "Diane Keaton's performance shows a species of heroism"; and Stanley Kauffmann: "She is the New Woman . . . entering the 20th century with an appetite for every freedom, with the air of a released prisoner's vengeance for wrongful past confinement." In other words, behold Louise Bryant on the barricades, carving out her own space. More attractive than Jill Clayburgh or Marsha Mason, Diane Keaton represents the top of the line of Hollywood's latest stock character: the liberated heroine whose liberation consists of being neither beautiful nor intelligent. The critics cheer and wave their scimitars because they are congratulating themselves on their tolerance. For it is now virtuous to suffer fools gladly, as long as the fools are graceless, mealy-mouthed women who have taken assertiveness training. Such tolerance may have peaked when Jill Clayburgh, asserting herself vis-à-vis Burt Reynolds in *Starting Over,* blew a great quantity of clear snot into her mittens. Keaton isn't quite that embarrassing, but she does give what *Newsweek* calls "a rich, complex portrait of a woman one comes to love, but only after struggling through a maze of ambiguous responses."

Louise Bryant may have been a fool, and there is nothing wrong with portraying a fool. But as *Newsweek* goes on to say: "She's also a determined romantic heroine, trekking across the frozen wastes of Finland to try to reach her lover rotting away in a Finnish jail." "*Doctor Zhivago!*" the critics cry in unison, recalling the daffodils that signified Yuri Zhivago's passion for Lara, and the separation that ends with his trekking across frozen wastes in search of her. In *Reds* the flowers are white lilies, shown over and over in case we miss the point. And the separation is not forced but voluntary, the result of an argument in which it is Reed's turn to carve out his own space. As for the trek, it is carried out by Bryant under the most clement of conditions. Unlike Zhivago, who stumbles on frozen feet through a blizzard in the midst of civil war, starving and hal-

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lucinating, the heroine of *Reds* proceeds on a smooth track under the blue skies of a peaceful Finland, well equipped with skis and provisions and a fetching wool hat—not to mention a male guide whose sole function is to give her a boost over the snowbanks.

But there is more to the comparison than a few ineptly cribbed details. *Reds* is said to resemble *Doctor Zhivago* in that it is "a great love story set against tumultuous historical events, fraught with conflict and full of passion," (*Newsweek*). These phrases are so familiar they don't even ring; they rattle. But they do suggest a certain priority for the love story. Of course the great theme of the novel *Doctor Zhivago* is the destruction of freedom and private life, scarcely done justice in the film. Yet the film *Doctor Zhivago* does manage to put human love before political ideology. In *Reds* this priority is reversed. The lovers' main passions are political: his for Communism, hers for her own emancipation. In Petrograd they sleep apart to demonstrate that she is his professional equal, which she clearly is not. But then the storming of the Winter Palace proves too stimulating for them, and the screen fills with their torsos, heaving like a bellows to the strains of the "Internationale." If this is what the critics mean by an "adult" relationship, then it must be left to children like Lara and Zhivago to find passion in each other.

At first the returns were disappointing, but like Zinoviev, Beatty is not too concerned about the unguided masses. No doubt they will heed the New York Film Critics, the National Board of Review, and the Hollywood Foreign Press Association—all of whom have bestowed awards upon *Reds*. And for those who are made uncomfortable by the contradictions, there is Jack Nicholson playing Eugene O'Neill, sending out caustic reminders of how absurd Reed and Bryant are. Of course, he is madly in love with the absurd Bryant, which will keep most viewers from connecting his remarks with the rest of the film. Any skeptics left over will be drowned out by the cheers. Some for a class war, some for a holy war; some for rhetoric, some for free speech; some for self-assertion, some for selfless love. It doesn't matter what they're cheering for, as long as they keep it up long enough to help Beatty seize power from George Lucas. □

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

POPULATION LOST

by Ben J. Wattenberg

Three hundred million people have disappeared during the past decade. Most of those missing persons were from the poor countries of the world. They are gone. Lost forever. These people were victims neither of a cruel famine nor of a tyrant's repression—but of plunging birthrates.

The missing 300 million Third Worlders are, of course, only a statistical artifact. They are people who, back in 1968, UN demographers predicted would be born by the year 2000. But by 1978, as birthrates kept falling, the same demographers predicted that those 300 million people would *not* be born by the turn of the century.

These changing projections point up a fact of our modern circumstance that has received very little attention. Yet it is a fact at the root of many modern distortions. What is happening is that around the world, the so-called "population explosion" is receding—and quite rapidly in most places.

Now, this does not mean that our planet won't ultimately house more people than it now has. This earth will indeed have more people—at least several billion more before we level off—and those new billions will cause some problems as they arrive. Even a lower growth rate still yields some growth until and unless it reaches zero. But what is also apparent is that those nightmare scenarios of ever-more non-stop billions of starving people packed like sardines in a can will never come to pass.

A brief look at data from the 20 most-populous countries provides a flavor of what's going on. These top 20 contain 75 percent of the world's population. (The numbers were assembled by the United Nations and analyzed by the U.S. Census Bureau's International Demographic Data Center, maestro Samuel Baum presiding.) Seven of the 20 biggest nations are categorized by the United Nations as "more developed." They are the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, Great Britain, West Germany, France, and Italy. Six of these seven nations are already at fertility levels that would lead to actual *declines* in population in years to come. The Soviets are only a smidgen away. Today, when planners in most of these "rich countries" look into the future, they are less concerned about a population explosion than about labor-force shortages.

But the biggest demographic question marks in recent years have concerned the major nations of the "less developed" world. A quick tour of these poor nations shows declines in birthrates everywhere, although at very different speeds. Begin at mainland China with almost a billion people today; it is surely the Big Daddy of nations when ranked by population. In the early 1950s, the mainland Chinese had an annual birthrate of 40 children per thousand people. By the late 1970s, just a quarter of a century later, that rate had fallen to 22. By comparison, America's birthrate today is 16; that is about what the United Nations predicts China's will be by the end of the century. India is No. 2 in the world with 667 million people. It has been thought of as a demographic basket case. India has had a much more moderate drop in birthrate than has China. In the late 1950s, India recorded 43 births per thousand; today the rate is about 35. But that drop is more significant than it may seem. A nation only has to achieve rates in the mid-teens to get a population stability over time. That means that in the past 20 years India got about a third of the way to rates that will produce zero population growth. The UN projections show India's birthrate dropping to 26 within the next 20 years—that's yet another third of the way there. Similar declines in birthrate are apparent in the two next-largest poor countries, Indonesia and Brazil. As recently as the early 1960s, Indonesia's birthrate was 46; now it's about 36. Brazil's was 44 in 1950; today it's about 30.

On the other hand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nigeria have all shown much smaller declines. Each had birthrates of around 50 in the 1950s and are only down to the mid-to-upper 40s today. That's still high. The remaining six big nations in the less-developed world break down this way: The birthrates of Thailand, Turkey, and Mexico have dropped about ten per thousand; that's a bigger decline than India's but not as sharp as China's. The Philippines and Egypt have lost about five per thousand. Data for Vietnam does not exist. For good measure, South Korea, the world's 21st largest nation, has seen a stunning drop in its birthrate, which has declined by

Ben J. Wattenberg is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. This article is adapted from Mr. Wattenberg's bi-monthly United Feature Syndicate column.

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about half in only the past 20 years, from 45 to 22.

The leverage of these sorts of declining rates is incredible. It's not just those missing 300 million. The differentials also involve many billions. Thus, the often-bizarre "Global 2000 Report" commissioned by President Carter cites a harum-scarum projection dealing with a world population of almost 30 billion in the next 120 years. (We now have 4.5 billion and are expected to grow to 6 billion by 2000.) But Carter's environmental activists were way out of touch. Even a few years ago the professional demographic alarmists were saying the world would grow to 15 billion to 20 billion people before leveling off. The "moderates" at that time were predicting a peak of 12 billion to 15 billion people.

Today, looking at the most recent birthrates, the low end of the moderate projections come in at about 10 billion while the low-ball demographers are talking about 8 billion. In short, many billions of people have statistically vanished! Moreover, what is never talked about is the thought that if some countries today have negative fertility rates, might not one day the world population as a whole decrease?

Are there some lessons to be gleaned from all this? I think so.

The first is this: There are no immutable projections. When some big out-of-town jasper with a pocket calculator comes up to you and says, "If present trends continue . . ."—hold onto your wallet. "Present trends" involving people typically *don't* continue, particularly if the trends are unfavorable. They change—because, unlike pocket calculators, people have control of their destiny. Birthrates were very high in this world when many infants did not survive. When those infants began surviving, birthrates began to drop. Mothers no longer had to rear six kids in order for two or three to live to adulthood. That's called "the demographic transition" and it concerns individuals making very personal and logical decisions with little regard to the fellows with pocket calculators.

Second, what is seen as bad news drives out what is seen as good news. The alleged "population explosion" dominated our consciousness for a quarter of a century. Its recessional march now attracts little attention.

Third, what's seen as bad news often isn't. The "population explosion" was regarded as "bad news" because the fellow with the calculator said that if you split a pie among more people, each person has less. That's an argument that may never be proved.

A famous demographer has noted that every baby comes equipped with not only a mouth but also with hands. People not only consume but also produce. That makes the pie grow. And isn't it odd that just about every nation in the world substantially raised its standard of living precisely while the "population explosion" was going on? Finally, science and statistics become ideological handmaidens. Thus, the (distorted) perception of the population explosion quickly yields corollaries: We're running out of resources, it's an era of limits, the rich are unfair to the poor, we need a new world economic order.

Not surprisingly, the fellows with the hot calculators will also be happy to tell you how to fix things. All you have to do is follow a handy little 17-point program that happens to be already typeset and at the printers. What we see, then, is a pattern that is observable elsewhere in our society: We trumpet and politicize bad trends that may not be bad and may not be trends.

That's bad. As for me, a political man, I trumpet only the idea that the projections of doom will not survive. Certainly not if present trends continue. □

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AMONG THE BELIEVERS: AN ISLAMIC JOURNEY

V.S. Naipaul / Alfred A. Knopf / $15.00

Ellen Wilson

What a wonderful travel book V.S. Naipaul would have written, had he written a travel book! His eye is accurate and tireless; his sentences are deceptively simple conductors of evocative detail. These natural gifts, let loose on the exotic landscapes and alien manners of the Islamic world, produce sensitive description on almost every page. Here, for example, is his first impression of Malaysia, after leaving the deserts of Pakistan:

> Malaysia steams. In the rainy season in the mornings the clouds build up. In the afternoon it pours, the blue-green hills vanish, and afterwards the clouds linger in the rifts in the mountains, like smoke. Creepers race up the steel guy ropes of telegraph poles; they overwhelm dying coconut branches, fall off, they cover dying trees or trees that cannot resist and create odd effects of topiary.

And this is an aerial view of the country around Mashhad, near the Russian border of Iran:

> The land over which we flew was mainly brown. The flat green fields to the east of Tehran quickly went by; and soon we were flying over bare mountains, now with centipedelike ranges, now cratered, now hard and broken, now with great smooth slopes veined from the watercourses created by melted snow.

In Indonesia his eye catches the extraordinary lighting effects of the late afternoon sun:

> The sun was red; it came red through the trees, fell red on the road. A faint mist rose off the rice fields; the blue hills went pale; and sun and sky were reflected in the water of the rice fields.

Naipaul, though, is more than a frustrated nature poet, and his descriptions of Moslem cities, with their hybrid cultures and divided loyalties, are vivid and convincing. He takes us into government offices and the anxious pressrooms of Tehran's post-revolutionary newspapers. He shows us student demonstrations and street paintings of beautiful women in tears. Not surprisingly for a writer who spends months on the road, he is keenly alive to variations in hotel accommodations—his description of the Khomeini-era Tehran Hilton, with its deserted French restaurant, Chez Maurice, meticulously set for nonexistent diners, is ludicrous yet oddly touching.

Ellen Wilson is a contributing editor to the Human Life Review *and author of* An Even Dozen *recently released by Human Life Press.*

Unfortunately, Naipaul aspires to more than a travel book, and, in the effort, achieves less. The title shows what he is about: He has come to the Moslem world to investigate the modern Islamic revival which has married political revolution with cultural and economic stagnation.

There is no pretense of neutrality: Naipaul is squarely on the side of the modern world, or as he calls it, "the universal civilization," and he criticizes Moslem efforts to enjoy its fruits without accepting moral responsibility:

> All the rejection of the West is contained within the assumption that there will always exist out there a living, creative civilization, oddly neutral, open to all to appeal to. Rejection, therefore, is not absolute rejection. It is also, for the community as a whole, a way of ceasing to strive intellectually. It is to be parasitic; parasitism is one of the unacknowledged fruits of fundamentalism.

Most Westerners would not quarrel with this analysis. The cultural dynamism of medieval Islam—which could tolerate Aristotle on the one hand and Omár Khayyam on the other—has long since spent itself, and today's Islam is suspicious of foreign innovations and wary of native ones. But Western offers are tempting, and a difficult moral calculus must be employed to determine the degree of contamination. Naipaul relishes the story of one Moslem leader—whose credentials as an opponent of Western ways were impeccable—who, at the end of his life, flew to a Boston hospital in a final bid for health: "Of the maulana it might be said that he had gone to his well-deserved place in heaven by way of Boston; and that he went at least part of the way by Boeing."

The sketches of Moslem cities and countryside, the exchanges with students and civil servants, teachers and Moslem holy men, the quickness to spot humbug or hypocrisy—these are marks of a writer who has refined journalism to high art. But to report is not to explain, and Naipaul seeks—vainly—to *explain* Islam's hold on its adherents. He unravels the abstruse religious genealogies of Moslem minority sects; he narrates Islamic martial epics; he visits model schools and describes their "stultifying" and "medieval" reliance on rote learning of the Koran. He talks with Iranian Marxists, and with Pakistanis hungering for a "pure" Islamic state. He interviews urbanized Malaysians uneasy about their surrender to modernity and nostalgic for the lost simplicities of village life. His efforts are prodigious. Yet Naipaul leaves me, in the end, confused and vaguely dissatisfied with his observations.

Midway through the book, Naipaul records a revealing conversation with a young Malaysian named Shafi, who presses him to produce his own statement of belief or code of life only to have Naipaul back off and retreat to the neutrality of the interviewer:

> "I would say: what is the purpose of your writing? Is it to tell people what it's all about?"
>
> "Yes, I would say comprehension."
>
> "Is it not for money?"
>
> "Yes. But the nature of the work is also important."
>
> I had shocked him. The idea of a vocation was new to him and—it was part of his openness—for a while he considered it . . .
>
> He said, with a regard that was like concern, "I would say you are losing something. You are not doing justice to yourself. You have been searching for truth and yet you haven't got the truth."
>
> "Let's get back to the United States."

This scene—and others like it throughout the book—pinpoints the book's constitutional weakness. Naipaul is quick to admit that he is not a religious man—he is an unbeliever among these believers—but the supposed advantages of neutrality and objectivity do not show themselves. Instead of clear insights and unbiased judgments, there is in Naipaul a curious sort of spiritual astigmatism, exaggerating what in religious terms is "normal," distorting his reactions and marring his observations. Instead of showing how the Islamic faith catalyzed that combination of religious zeal and xenophobic hatred, fierce nationalism and moated isolationism, cultural stagnation and revolutionary fervor known as the modern Moslem world, Nai-

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paul provides a William James catalogue of the varieties of religious experience. I finished the book convinced of the intense and even fanatic faith of the Moslem people, but was there ever any doubt? Whether Islamic religiosity differs from that of the rest of the world is a question Naipaul is not equipped either to pose or to answer. He seems strangely unaware that large portions of the rest of the world (his "universal civilization") cultivate alternative religious identities.

In other words, not only does Naipaul not believe, he doesn't understand what it means to believe. I couldn't help wondering, as he probed Islamic psyches and questioned Islamic expressions of faith, how other religions, Christianity say, would have fared under the same treatment. Your average pious Christian, asked to explain his faith and the way it informs his social and political life, would probably entangle himself in a Gordian knot of logical contradictions and opaque affirmations. What either performance would prove is unclear.

This is not to suggest that there is no difference between Christianity and Islam, or that all religions are fundamentally alike, only that the agnostic is uniquely unqualified to demonstrate where those differences lie. He is like the Occidental to whom all Orientals look alike. All religious people strike him as odd and "unreasonable," and he wastes much time and effort puzzling out attitudes that would immediately be comprehensible to Jews or Christians or even South Sea cannibals.

Naipaul thus dwells on submission to the will of God as though it were an Islamic quirk, and distastefully labels it "the Islamic idea of unity or union; men abased together before the creator, and bound by rigid rules." Yet all major religions—and all the minor ones I am acquainted with—exact, at least in theory, a similar submission, a similar confession of man's littleness in the sight of his Creator. But then, the whole question of a Creator discomfits Naipaul:

> "Do you believe in a creator?"
> I said, "No."
> "But that is the basis of Islam."
> "It's too difficult for me," I said, after we had had some discussion. "I feel lost if I think too much about the universe."

All articles of faith, all claims to revelation seem equally outlandish, equally implausible to Naipaul. He shakes his head over the prospects of students training to become Moslem missionaries: "The message they were going to take into the world was extraordinary: a divinely inspired Prophet, arbitrary rules, a pilgrimage to a certain stone, a month of fasting." How, I wonder, would he react to a message about a god who came down to earth and accepted death for the sake of his creatures?

If Naipaul is uncomfortable with religion, he is very comfortable with modern demythologized Western society. He is grateful for its standard of living and the opportunities it offers him for fulfillment. He is proud of its technical accomplishments and hopeful of its political and economic expertise. He cannot enter into, let alone sympathize with, that disenchantment with the World that is the hallmark of religious man. He observes and records it as a puzzling phenomenon, an unexplained oddity:

> . . . as he read his voice broke. At times he seemed about to sob: Islam as anguish, hell, heaven, redemption. And that, as I understood, was the theme of the Iqbal poem: how, without the Prophet or knowledge of his mission, could the world be endured?

But this, in one way or another, is the theme of all religions: How, without God, could the world be endured? It may be hokum; it may

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interfere with the enjoyment of life on a natural level. Still, all religions, however much they may quarrel on other points, agree on this one: Religion makes a difference. .

Naipaul's religious blind spot—or perhaps I should call it hypersensitivity—tends to polarize reaction to his book. Readers like Naipaul himself, patriotic citizens of "the universal civilization," confident that the acceptance of this civilization, with its medicine and its mechanized farming, its parliamentary systems and its institutions of higher learning, will bring prosperity and contentment to the Third World—these readers will react as Naipaul does and deplore Arabia's inexplicable attachment to this dogmatic religion. They will confound the fervor of Iran's Marxist students with the zeal of her Moslem mullahs, and prescribe as an antidote the benign reasonableness of the secular West, with its pursuit of comfort and exaltation of material well-being.

Those readers, however, who derive "universal civilization" from specific, spiritually fortified Judeo-Christian roots—who do not deny the value of material goods or technical expertise but perceive the need for spiritual fundaments—will have mixed reactions to this book. They will, of course, agree with Naipaul's criticisms of the Moslem state's confusion of political and religious spheres and its attempt to create a religious utopia. But when Naipaul draws facile connections between these conditions and submission to God, or "rigid rules," or "Islamic" repudiations of self-seeking and materialism, they will be tempted to side with his Moslem subjects.

"Tempted," because there are radical differences—radical *disagreements*—between Islam and the West. It is a pity that Naipaul could not focus on these peculiarly Islamic—as opposed to religious—traits, and thus extend our understanding of this alien part of the world. At times he seems on the verge of doing so, or at least, he pushes the limits of what the "reasonable" man can do:

> The Prophet had founded a state. He had given men the idea of equality and union. The dynastic quarrels that had come early to this state had entered the theology of the religion; so that this religion, which filled men's days with rituals and ceremonies of worship, which preached the afterlife, at the same time gave men the sharpest sense of worldly injustice and made that part of religion.
>
> This late-twentieth-century Islam appeared to raise political issues. But it had the flaw of its origins—the flaw that ran right through Islamic history: to the political issues it raised it offered no political or practical solution. It offered only the faith.

Ultimately, Naipaul's faith in political and practical solutions, in economic expertise and sophisticated parliamentary procedure, collides with Islam's faith in . . . the Faith: "It was the late twentieth century—and not the faith—that could supply the answers—in institutions, legislation, economic systems." Like a latter-day Wilsonian, Naipaul wants to make the Islamic world safe for democracy; like a Kiplingesque believer in the White Man's Burden, he wants them to swallow the "universal civilization" whole.

Early in the book an Iranian Moslem tells Naipaul that Islam stands for four things: "Brotherhood, honesty, the will to work, proper recompense for labour." Naipaul's response shows the chasm separating him from these people—and also, perhaps, from some of us: "Still I didn't follow. Why not call for those four things? Why go beyond those four things? Why involve those four things with something as big as Islam?" Tolstoy might have provided him with a clue in "What Men Live By." Poland might provide him with a clue today. □

Eliot A. Cohen is a teaching fellow in the Department of Government of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University.

MONTY: THE MAKING OF A GENERAL (1887-1942)

Nigel Hamilton / McGraw-Hill / $22.95

Eliot A. Cohen

Monty has never had a good press in the United States. In books and movies—particularly *Patton*—he appears as an insubordinate weasel of a man, a rather comic figure who twitters about "thwashing Wommel" before moving to hog the oil and supplies that rightfully belong to American generals. Even in Great Britain, Monty's reputation has suffered under the onslaughts of Corelli Barnett's *The Desert Generals* and Alun Chalfont's unauthorized biography. Nigel Hamilton's *Monty: The Making of a General (1887-1942)* is a massive attempt to rehabilitate him, to defend him against criticism which stemmed in large part from Monty's undeniable vanity, nastiness, and mendacity.

One must begin by admitting that *qua* biography this is a poor piece of work. Hamilton, who was befriended by Montgomery as a boy of twelve, says in the Foreword, "the gift of his friendship—the manner in which he took me into his house as a second son—is not something I can ever forget; and in undertaking this biography I felt I would be repaying a debt of gratitude." This, then, is hardly an objective piece of work, however honorable the biographer's motives. True, Hamilton does not conceal Monty's petty viciousness and most other flaws in his character—but he does try to excuse them. In fact, he goes further, making Montgomery out to be *the* hero of the Allied cause, greater even than Churchill (who, like most other politicians and soldiers who cross Monty's path in this book, dies a literary death of a thousand cuts). ". . . It was not until Bernard Montgomery took command of the 8th Army in Egypt in 1942 that Britain—and the Allies—produced a leader capable of arousing a spirit of unyielding offensive self-sacrifice. . . ."

Hamilton has other faults, among them a taste for psycho-twaddle. He indulges in irritating and pointless explorations of Montgomery's difficult relationship with his mother—as if all men who do not get along with their mothers become, of necessity, great generals. Hamilton is a poor hand at giving the political and sometimes even the military background of the events he describes—at best, he offers only stage flats to set off the strutting of his hero. He even forgets that military history makes little sense without detailed and colorful topographical description. And yet he writes too much: This book spends 850 pages and barely reaches the end of the battle of El Alamein (although Hamilton does retell that struggle well). In sum, *Monty* lacks the perspective and the clarity of such great military biographies as G.F.R. Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson*, or Field Marshal Slim's memoirs, *Defeat Into Victory*.

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All this notwithstanding, this book will repay an intelligent skimming, because of one cardinal fact. Unlike all previous historians, Hamilton had complete access to Montgomery's papers. Given the restrictions on the use of these materials, this is likely to be the most fully documented biography of Monty that we will see for some time. In this light, Hamilton's indiscriminate volubility proves to be the book's main strength. He reproduces many of Montgomery's memoranda, orders, and reports and quotes at length from his own numerous interviews with Monty's contemporaries and subordinates. Whoever is patient enough to sift through the book will begin to see what makes a great general.

And Montgomery *was* a great general. He led his Third Division in a brilliantly successful retreat in France in 1940 (I do not mean to be ironic but simply to stress that retrograde movements are the most difficult ones in war). He beat Rommel at Alam Halfa and at Alamein, when in neither case was his material superiority that much greater than that of his predecessors. He fought his way through Sicily and, in northwest France in 1944, his troops moved almost as far and as fast as Patton's. In both Sicily and Europe, moreover, his armies pinned down German forces and thereby paved the way for Patton's audacious maneuvers, much as Grant's slugging matches with Lee in the Wilderness enabled Sherman to slice through the heart of the Confederacy.

Montgomery, of course, had his failings. His MARKET-GARDEN plan—the scheme to drive his armies across the Rhine through a corridor seized and held by paratroops—was excessively ambitious and fragile, as Cornelius Ryan makes clear in *A Bridge Too Far*. He did not have the same urge or talent for ruthless exploitation of a victory as Patton or Rommel—Hamilton does not discuss Monty's failure to annihilate Rommel after the crushing victory of Alamein. Nonetheless, Monty was a superb strategist and tactician; his adversaries' memoirs (particularly *The Rommel Papers*) pay tribute to his talents.

What made him a great commander? For one thing, Hamilton's account reveals Montgomery's uncommon skill at training troops. His methods ranged from individual training of the soldier to tactical exercises without troops for his officers, to eleven-day corps-sized "rough houses" with tens of thousands of men and all their paraphernalia. Small wonder that in France his Third Division managed to remain a cohesive and effective unit until the very end, for Monty had ceaselessly practiced his men in long and orderly retreats. Again and again we see Monty insisting on the importance of tough and realistic training: He worked his men at night and in dirty weather; he made officers—even the most sedentary—join their men for seven-mile cross-country runs; he required all officers to train their subordinates to take their places and once ran an exercise on the assumption that all officers were casualties—only sergeants left; he insisted that all units under his command, even garrison troops, practice prolonged mobile warfare.

Monty was also remarkably free of military prejudices. His chief intelligence officer in 1940, later the commander of his tactical headquarters in Europe in 1944-45, was a Territorial officer (the English equivalent of a National Guardsman)—a category despised by most British Army regulars. He promoted men on the basis of merit, not membership in fashionable regiments. He was open to technical inventions and advances, such as airborne warfare or the possibilities of close air support. Above all, he insisted on teamwork among all branches—infantry, armor, artillery, and engineers. He was not a "tank general" or an "artillery general" but simply a general. One of his first and most important decisions upon arriving in North Africa was that henceforth units would fight as divisions (the basic combined arms team) rather than in smaller *ad hoc* groups.

Monty knew how to pace himself and his men. He was careful to keep himself fit (he neither drank nor smoked) and well rested—Hamilton describes his annoyance at aides who woke him for anything less than the

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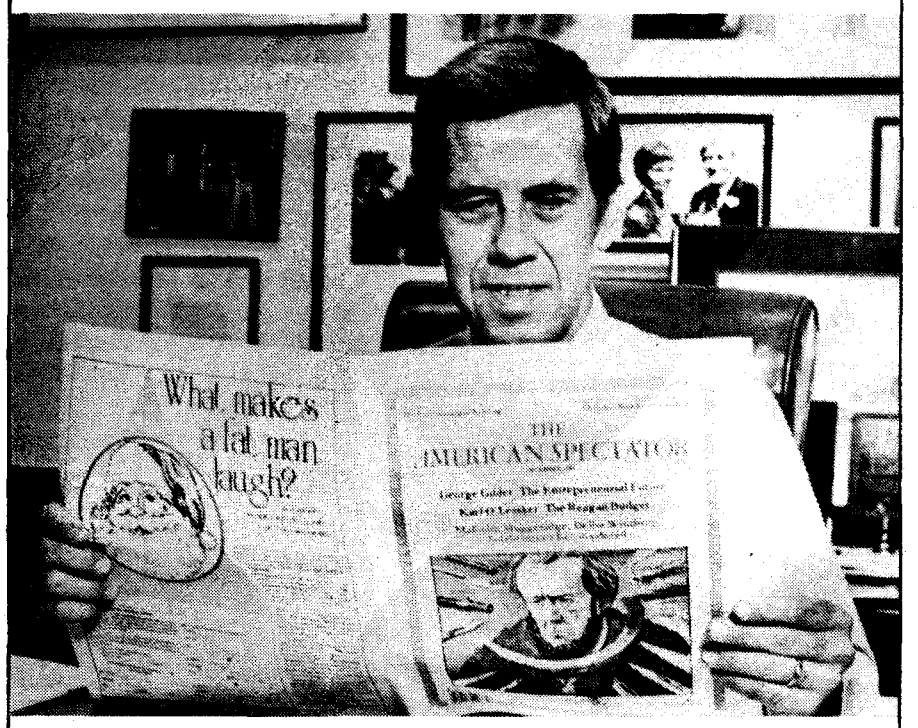

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gravest emergencies. Similarly, he would drive his men hard, when necessary, but placed particular importance on the kinds of small creature comforts and recreation that keep soldiers going.

Monty's greatest asset, however, was his ability to impress his military persona—his way of doing things, and his intentions—on the Eighth Army. Churchill had described the Eighth Army under its previous commanders as brave but bewildered. It had suffered humiliating defeats and redeemed them, but it lacked a sense of direction. One day it was preparing to withdraw to Cairo, the next to drive Rommel from North Africa; one day it was instructed to break up its divisions, the next to reunite them. Montgomery's great ability, in the words of Brigadier John Strawson, "was that he seemed to know exactly what to do, explained it in terms which made everyone both clear as to what was required and convinced that it was right, and then went on actually to do it." Monty's memos, orders, and speeches are superbly clear and concise, and the copious testimony of officers who served under him confirms one's sense that he knew how to talk to soldiers.

Like most great generals, Monty had a sense of theater, as evidenced, for example, by his rule that there would be no coughing during his talks (although he relented from time to time by giving thirty-second coughing breaks during his longer discourses). His famous bush hat, studded with the regimental badges of all the units he had visited, was another clever psychological device. His ruthless willingness to purge incompetents among his officers—a prerequisite of great generalship—must also have contributed to a sense of security among front-line troops. In short, even if Monty's men did not love him—he was a remote and indeed unlovable man—they trusted him. Soldiers will risk their lives if need be, but not for commanders they think fools or butchers.

Hamilton continually calls Monty a "professional" and his rivals in the British Army "amateurs"—and by this he refers not to their respective lengths of time in uniform but to their attitudes toward service. He overworks the point, but it is a valid one. Monty was enormously competent at his job because he practiced and studied it to the exclusion of all else. This might not have made him a pleasant dinner companion, but it did make him a very good general.

The lesson to be derived from this book is an important one. The American armed forces—and to a greater extent sections of the informed American public—are turning against the "managerial" officer in favor of the "warrior" type. In some measure this is a welcome development—unlike too many of our officers today, none of the great commanders of World War II that I know of had advanced degrees in business administration. On the other hand, we must beware of succumbing to a puerile romanticism, an unthinking admiration of commanders who take absurd risks, who exhaust or kill their men and ruin their equipment in pursuit of visions of swift, brilliant, and conclusive victory, of out-Pattoning Patton as it were. Rommel was rather like that—and Montgomery thrashed him. □

MORNINGS ON HORSEBACK
David McCullough / Simon & Schuster / $19.95

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr.

Few of our more uncommon Presidents, one suspects, would have survived the devices of electronic politics. What would Miss Barbara Walters have made of Washington's stodgy demeanor and uncomfortable false teeth? Of Jefferson's pet mockingbird? Of Lincoln's penchant for melancholy dreams? And what, indeed, of Theodore Roosevelt *tout court*?

Of all the notable Presidents this "accidental President" at 42 was probably the most unusual. *Mornings on Horseback* is not, however, another study of TR's colorful and combative Presidency. It ends with his return, many thousands of dollars the poorer, from ranching in the Dakota Badlands. Its subject is the atypical, one might almost say un-American, provenance of a really quite strange young man.

Roosevelt's strangeness lay, for the most part, in the elements of his heritage, awaiting transmittal. In rough order of significance they were the characters of his father and mother, his membership in one of the principal old New York families (this was the era portrayed by Edith Wharton), his precarious health, and his nurturing in an insulated world of privilege and high principle.

TR's father, the first Theodore Roosevelt, affectionately known to the family as "Thee," moved at a social level where public spiritedness did not readily translate into an interest in politics—and in fact bred a certain contempt for it. Politics was no trade for a merchant-gentleman, and neither was war. During the Civil War, the elder Roosevelt hired a substitute and none of his peers thought the worse of him for doing so. His tireless efforts to induce ordinary soldiers to lay aside a portion of their pay for wives and children suggest an attempt at compensation. But his situation was quite impossible. He was married to a Georgia lady of passionate Confederate sympathies whose brothers were active in the Rebel cause. The war demanded delicacies of forbearance that could not have come easy in such a divided household.

Not until well after the war when the passion for civil service reform broke out among the well-born Mugwumps of New York and New England did the elder Theodore seek

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Washington Post *and former editorial page editor of the* Washington Star.

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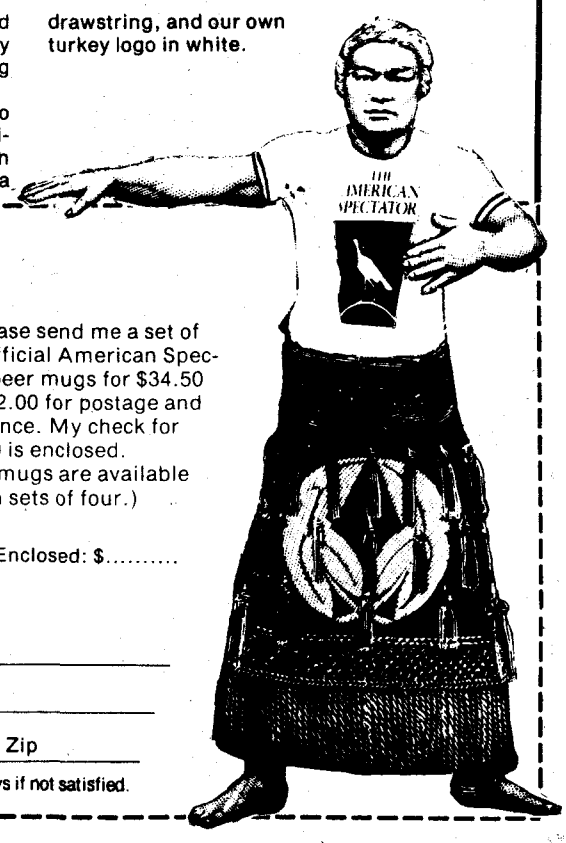

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(or consent to accept) public office. Rutherford B. Hayes wanted to appoint him chief customs inspector for New York, a capital plum in those days. But even this tentative sally into the bruising political combat of the day ended in humiliation when Sen. Roscoe Conkling thwarted the appointment.

Whether the elder Roosevelt's avoidance of arms or his brutal reversal in the customs appointment fight shaped TR's own ambitions is the sort of question David McCullough refuses to answer glibly. More to the point is that the younger Roosevelt idolized this kindly, earnest, upstanding father and felt his early death (of stomach cancer in his mid-40s) so sharply that he grieved for years. By TR's own admission, he never felt up to the example his father set.

TR's mother came of the Georgia Bullochs, a gifted family that in the Southern tradition produced warriors as readily as the old New York Dutch families produced high-minded Calvinists and doers of good civic deeds. Her brother James Bulloch, acting as Jefferson Davis's agent, procured the building of Confederate raiders in British shipyards, which strained Anglo-American relations during and after the war. "Mittie" Bulloch Roosevelt was a gay, articulate, enjoying woman (with a fetish for cleanliness: She took two baths at a time, one to soap and the other to rinse) whose way with words shows up in all her children—especially the future President, who was to leave many books and 150,000 letters.

David McCullough is the first TR biographer, so far as I am aware, to dig beneath the received accounts of TR's boyhood frailties. When TR as a lad suffered horribly from asthmatic attacks, the psychosomatic aspects of this terrifying disorder were dimly understood. By the mid-1880s, early medical experiment had established the acute responsiveness of asthmatics to family situation, but by then TR was no longer a child. From family documents, McCullough does show that young "Teedie's" worst attacks seemed to occur on Sundays. It may be relevant that his mother apparently was a conforming agnostic. More to the point, perhaps, is that these Sunday bouts of asthma assured him the keen attention of his worshipped but sometimes distracted father. (TR, incidentally, even at his most robust, was never to be entirely cured of asthma, nor of the other chronic illness, *cholera morbus,* that made him a frail and sickly child.)

The Roosevelts' private world provided a scale of ease and luxury open to few—travel, private tutors, household museums, generous allowances. The great, rather dowdy New York town houses, the grand tours, the keen attention of servants, the warm and affectionate solicitude of a large and close-knit family—all formed a sort of cocoon insulating the young TR from hardness. He was, as his extensive childhood diaries show, precocious. His lifelong passion for natural history began at an early age. There is a charming picture of him during a family trip up the Nile, blasting away at bird specimens and spending long hours on the decks of the hired river boat skinning and mounting them.

All of this, of course, formed an improbable background for a late nineteenth-century American politician. Little wonder that when TR entered politics as a young New York state legislator he struck the hardened cases in Albany as a specimen quite as exotic as any Nile birdlife. The perfect and prominent teeth, the ribboned pince-nez, the squeaky, plummy voice and diction, the abrasively righteous views—these

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did not captivate those who viewed politics as a practical art of horse-trading or, worse, of jobbery, bribery, and pillage. Nor were TR's early views at all remarkable. The patrician reformism of his father's circle came naturally—it was said by one wit that he "seems to have a pulpit concealed on his person." Just as naturally, he knew little of the circumstances in which more ordinary people lived. He called for the restoration of the whipping post for certain crimes. He also opposed a nickel-an-hour minimum wage, although he was soon to respond generously to the tutelage of Samuel Gompers. The Albany days revealed little of the future progressive.

Theodore Roosevelt's life blended, in almost freakish opposition, the gifts that birth, money, and secure position could bestow with sudden, cruel deprivations. His father died in his 40s. His wife (of Bright's disease) and his mother (of typhoid) died within hours of each other while he was still a young man. His amiable brother Elliot, the father of Eleanor Roosevelt, was an alcoholic and a fugitive from family responsibilities, not to survive the century. Another sister suffered from a spinal deformity. So it was by fate no less than fortune that TR was set apart from ordinary experience. McCullough writes:

> There were no answers save "God's will" or "fate, strange and terrible fate," Theodore said. The sole, overwhelming lesson was the awful brevity of life. . . . An asthmatic childhood had shown that life could be stifled, cut off, unless one fought back, and all Papa's admonitions to get action, to seize the moment, had the implicit message that there was not much time after all. Nothing lasts. Winter waits.

That is the essential theme of what this subtle, elegant, and humane biography has to tell us about the shaping of TR. The author has undoubtedly examined the claims of the "psychobiographical" techniques now fashionable, and occasionally makes unobtrusive use of their insights—but invariably without calling into play their penchant for arrogant pronouncements, a ponderous apparatus, and depreciative jargon. The Theodore Roosevelt of *Mornings on Horseback* is indeed the sum of his experiences and nurture. But he was far more; that is obvious. David McCullough is too seasoned and sensitive an observer of human character to slip into the artless habits of post-Freudian biography, too wise and observant of complications to reduce life's mysteries to sovereign explanations. □

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WITHIN THE WHIRLWIND

Eugenia Ginzburg / Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / $17.50

Anne Crutcher

Like Tolstoy's happy families, Soviet dissident memoirs are, in an important sense, all alike. The harrowing details are the same no matter which area of the Gulag sets the stage. The revelations of depravity and spiritual triumph repeat themselves. The same political insights keep turning up.

Yet each new testimony is as fascinating as the last. Partly, the appeal persists because of eternal qualities in the drama Soviet dissidents describe. The individual soul defending itself against Them—society, the state, whoever wields the collective power—has been a riveting theme since *Antigone*. Twentieth-century history has not diminished its relevance.

The kind of people who write Soviet dissident memoirs compound the fascination. It's a line of work that attracts superior minds and noble spirits. There is a general catharsis to be had in the recollections of a Solzhenitsyn, an Amalrik, or a Bukovsky. There is also the specific moral exhilaration of contact with an order of human being you don't run into every day.

Certainly all this holds for Eugenia Ginzburg, a magnificent woman rendered the more magnificent by her season in hell. Her story follows the familiar outline. A good Communist, married to a party dignitary and herself doing well in the hierarchy—she was a history professor at the University of Kazan—she got into trouble because she was not quick enough to denounce a colleague who had been nailed as a Trotskyist in the Stalin purges of 1937. That defined her as a "counter-revolutionary terrorist" and launched her on 18 years of prison and Siberian exile.

Into the Whirlwind, the first volume of her autobiography, published in 1967, tells how she was expelled from the party and arrested. It was no help when, as a sincere believer in the Soviet system, she demanded justice according to Soviet law.

Her husband's willingness to go along with anything the party did put a permanent emotional distance between him and her. Ironically, it was no better guarantor of safety than her unwillingness. He was arrested shortly after she was.

Her early prison experiences included a cross-section of the possible horrors. She managed to survive solitary confinement in a freezing cell, transportation to Siberia in a crowded boxcar, extra punishment for resisting a guard's sexual overtures, a stint of tree-felling at 49 degrees below zero and, of course, the potentially mortal illnesses that go with such treatment.

In such a context, the word "luck" might be expected to ring false. In Eugenia Ginzburg's case, though, the context establishes its validity. She speaks of herself as lucky, and she was. Again and again, some generous person or unpredictable turn of events would save her from going over the precipice.

As *Within the Whirlwind*, the second volume of her memoirs, begins, the luck has done its work once more. A nearly dead Eugenia has been restored to health by a woman doctor with a bad conscience. After a few further brushes with disaster, she has been assigned to a job as a nurse in a home for children born in labor camps. Never mind that the name of the camp, Elgen, is the word for corpse in the Yakut language; considering the local alternatives, it's a good job.

The rest of her ten-year sentence included returns to tree-felling as well as other hospital jobs, one of which led to her supreme good fortune. There, amid so many deprivations, she encountered true love. The man was Dr. Anton Walter, a German physician, a fellow prisoner, and a worthy partner for even such as Eugenia. There, where prisoners were routinely robbing and betraying each other for crumbs, these two found the ultimate in mutual devotion. They even had what might be called fun together.

The poignance of their intimacy reaches an epic vividness in Eugenia's account of the last day of her ten-year sentence, after which she could look forward to the comparative bliss of Siberian exile without civil rights. She and Anton, separated by miles of Arctic emptiness, were able to see each other fairly regularly because of his privileged position as a doctor and hers as a kindergarten attendant.

The last day found her like a person who has patiently endured a year in plaster but who cannot stand five minutes more. When the doctor telephoned to say they must postpone their reunion because of a threatened blizzard, she reacted with frenzied determination to meet him anyway.

Like a mythic incarnation of dauntless love, she set out on foot. When the blizzard descended, she was terrified of death in the snow. When she saw a man approaching her from the other direction, she was further terrified of being robbed and killed But fact can accommodate as much poetry as fiction. It was he.

The book's richness in vignettes as moving as this says something about the way Gulag conditions reduce life to primordial patterns. It also says something about Eugenia Ginzburg's literary flair. She had an artist's sensitivity to the details that crystallize the essence of experience.

She was not only a natural creator of literature but one whom literature nourished. Her defense against hopelessness and degradation was to recite poetry. She and her younger son, reunited after a dozen years apart, re-established emotional connection by reciting alternate passages from poems he had learned from her as a four-year-old.

Still, the moral dimensions of her sensibility left room for guilt. Is

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Anne Crutcher is a journalist based in Washington, D.C.

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teaching children to say "We love Comrade Stalin better than Mommy or Daddy" buying safety at too high a price?

She was never sure. But she knew she was not the only one to feel moral qualms in the midst of survival anxieties. More than once, she owed her life to somebody else's need for atonement.

She saw it without sentimentality, as she saw everything else, including the limits of human ability to transcend inhuman treatment. Adversity purifies, she observed, but only up to a point. After that, it numbs and destroys the strongest.

In the end, though, humility and skepticism fuse with the grander aspects of her nature to give the book its profoundly affirmative impact. Speaking of the selfless joy prisoners showed at the release of their fellows, she says "To see someone emerging on the far side of the barbed wire was to make contact with freedom. When freedom appeared, all ignoble sentiments were hushed. There was no question of envying the man who at the moment personified freedom. He had to be conducted reverentially to the gates to ensure that he didn't spill the precious gift he had recovered."

Who can read that and doubt that despair is a sin? □

PRESIDENTIAL ANECDOTES
Paul F. Boller, Jr. / Oxford University Press / $14.95

THE OXFORD BOOK
OF AMERICAN LITERARY ANECDOTES
Edited by Donald Hall / Oxford University Press / $15.95

Mitchell S. Ross

These collections of anecdotes are consistently amusing. There are hundreds of wonderful stories in them. They yield no grand generalizations about the nature of writers or Presidents, save the obvious one that eminentoes are people, too. So call the books puddings without themes if you like; they are tasty all the same.

In *Presidential Anecdotes,* Paul Boller simply and sensibly calls the roll of the forty Presidents, introducing each with a brief, fluent narrative to which some briefer anecdotes are then tagged on. In the book of literary anecdotes, Donald Hall is faced with the problem of sifting and selecting his material. On the whole he handles it well, although there are too many uninteresting stories about overrated modern poets for my taste. This is no doubt because Hall is himself a writer of verse who shares with his colleagues a tendency to inflate the importance of the lyrical expositions of neuroses that for the most part compose twentieth-century poetry.

These anecdotes handsomely illustrate the vanities and cupidities of great men. Reading through them I found the writers more arrogant than the Presidents. This seems to me fitting and proper as the writer, after all, maintains sovereignty over his own talent; whereas the politician, however exalted, is installed in office by the electorate for a limited period of time, and is all the while at the mercy of various unlovely special interest groups.

Even so, many writers have felt moved to act like politicians on occasion, particularly when contemplating that Scandinavian chimera, the Nobel Prize. Theodore Dreiser offered H.L. Mencken a piece of the action if Dreiser could sail triumphantly to Stockholm. "Start the ball," he wrote, "and if I snake the forty thousand—isn't that what the lucky mutt is supposed to draw?—you get five thousand." Several years later, after Sinclair Lewis had become the first American author to win the Prize, Dreiser climaxed a period of unpleasantness between the two men by slapping Lewis's face in public.

The poet Theodore Roethke was another who felt himself deserving of the arctic laurel. "Why shouldn't we begin mending and weaving and doing whatever is necessary," he wrote to his editor, "to bring the Nobel in poetry to America? . . . I think Wystan Auden should be next, then Pablo Neruda, then me and that's a cold, considered, objective judgment."

John Steinbeck worried about the effect of the Prize on its recipients. "I've always been afraid of it because of what it does to people. For one thing I don't remember anyone doing any work after getting it except maybe Shaw. . . . Maybe I'm being over-optimistic but I wouldn't have accepted it if I hadn't thought I could beat the rap." Well, he was being over-optimistic: In the six years of life that remained to him after winning the Prize, Steinbeck published nothing. Dreiser and Roethke, by the way, never won it. In any event it is funny, and sad, to see so many talented men coveting the benediction of a handful of Swedish professors.

By contrast, the egotism of Presidents has often been tempered by an understanding of political reality. Many Presidents of the United States have been profoundly mediocre men, and have known it. "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln," declared Gerald Ford. "I am a man of limited talents from a small town," said Warren Harding. When Millard Fillmore was offered an honorary degree from Oxford University he turned it down, explaining, "No man should, in my judgment, accept a degree he cannot read." Rutherford B. Hayes, known as His Fraudulency after his dubious victory over Samuel Tilden in the 1876 election, felt no urge to prove his bona fides by running for a second term. "I am heartily tired of this life of bondage, responsibility and toil," he said.

Our funniest Presidents have been two vastly different men, Abraham Lincoln and Calvin Coolidge. Lincoln viewed life with a lofty cynicism and lightened his sadness with laughter: Recall his reading from Artemus Ward before announcing the Emancipation Proclamation to the seated secretaries of his cabinet. The sleepy, laconic Coolidge was an American original. The former Governor of Massachusetts was once greeted at the White House by an excited guest: "Mr. President, I'm from Boston!" Coolidge: "You'll never get over it."

Break open the Wild Turkey and strike up the band! Between the covers of these two books you will find a festival of Americana that will fill you with patriotic pride and encourage you to let loose with a few Bronx cheers. □

Mitchell S. Ross is author of The Literary Politicians *and* An Invitation to Our Times.

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Julian L. Simon

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CAPITOL IDEAS

(continued from page 6)

good fight and was if anything dismayed by the swift and almost unopposed victory of science.)

Now, I suspect, this authority is being retrieved by clergymen. This thought at first seems fantastically off-target, the Death of God being so recent an event, but one can't help noticing that Popes, Mullahs, and Metropolitans are roaming the Earth once again, and my guess is we haven't seen anything yet. One indication is provided by the behavior of the "germs" of socialism, that most debilitating disease of our time. These germs are always transmitted by the most authoritative "carriers" of the day. Remember "scientific socialism"? It has rather an old-fashioned ring to it now. Today it is not the "scientific" but the "moral" character of socialism that most highly recommends it. "Liberation theology" is the new battleground of socialism.

One may ask why the prestige of science is crumbling. For one thing its offspring, technology, has not yielded a utopia, but rather nuclear fallout with the likelihood of worse to come. Science has also perhaps become too popular and popularized for its practitioners to seem worthy of being vested with priestly authority.

Science also asserts the hegemony of materialism, and it has become quite apparent in the past decade that materialism is a philosophy which exerts only a weak hold on man's mind. The picture of life that it entails is too boring and humdrum and unconvincing to persuade us much longer, and it is now being discarded, I think. Materialism asserts that the "billiard balls" of matter only move when struck by other billiard balls—that material effects have material causes. This is true, as science asserts, but is it always true? May there not be times when material manifestations have non-material antecedents?

You only have to see magazines like *Omni,* and films like *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* to realize that the culture today is beginning to flirt with the idea that such "magical" moments really exist. If this is so—and of course we should not forget that the movement imparted to matter by *mind* constitutes a non-material intervention in nature (you can't find the mind, see it, weigh it, or measure it)—then it follows that science, whose major underlying premise is the uniformity of nature, is true most of the time but not quite all the time.

That's why this resurgence of creationism makes people like Gould "concerned and angry," as he has written. He attributes this in part to "unquestioning authoritarianism," which is true. But then science itself has been highly authoritarian. Take a look at the University of Chicago's proceedings of the 1959 Darwin Centennial, Julian Huxley's remarks in particular, if you don't believe me. Gould also attributes the creationist resurgence to "rightist groups," which is just wishful thinking on his part. The real reason is that the authority of science is crumbling, that authority is migrating elsewhere, and with it the faith in materialism—the belief that there are no nonmaterial interventions in nature—is receding. The question to be asked about creationism is not "Is it science?" (of course it isn't) but "Is it true?" □

CONTINUING CRISIS

(continued from page 2)

book, writing every Jane she finds, and her researches have taken her even beyond the Louisville directory. She has written Miss Jane Pauley in New York, some 771 miles away, and Princess Diana of far-off England seeking the princess's good offices in securing a letter from her sister, Lady Jane. New York's Governor Hugh Carey announced that he will not seek a third term but instead will devote the year to making his state "at once compassionate and competitive." In Holland, Michigan a young girl died when a hospital bed went out of control, and Mr. Ken Follet of Great Britain remains at large. Mr. Follet, attired in pinstripe trousers, a black jacket, and a battered bowler with a Union Jack flying from its band, calls himself the "self-appointed British ambassador to the world." As of last month he had hitchhiked and cycled through 50 countries and covered 62,000 miles. Yet no one objects.

• Naderites received Glad Tiding when Sheik Abdel-Aziz, the Saudi Arabian theologian, asseverated that women should restrain themselves from driving automobiles, lest they run "the risk of falling into incalculable sins." Dr. Frederick T. Zugibe, a pathologist who has examined the Holy Shroud of Turin, has come to the belief that the late Jesus Christ may have suffered the same affliction as President Abraham Lincoln, Marfan's syndrome. It is a finding certain to please others who are tall, thin and have an arm span greater than their height, though it might make them think twice about taking controversial positions.

• On the culture beat, those 13 Mill Valley, California cheerleaders who suffered burning eyes, itching skin, nausea, and disintegrating pantyhose have been cured. The miracle came about when state health officials scrutinized the girls' pompons, as they are called, and discovered that one had accidentally absorbed acid from an automobile battery. The offending pompon has been retired and the act goes on. Chill swept through the artistic community when it was learned that officials in Milwaukee, Wisconsin would not allow rock musician Ozzy Osbourne to bite the heads off bats or even doves, a bird long loathed by conservatives. More-

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over, Mr. Osbourne was even barred from using raw liver, which he throws and spits during his performance. Earlier in the month Mr. Osbourne received a precautionary treatment for rabies after he bit off the head of a bat in Des Moines, Iowa. In Baltimore, Maryland an unidentified phantom returned for the 32nd year in a row to place three roses and a half-full bottle of French brandy on the grave of Edgar Allen Poe.

• The ramparts of the Chathem town band, a bastion of misogyny, is under assault by progressives. For more than a half century the Cape Cod institution has been all-male, but now the Massachusetts Attorney General's office is taking action against it based on a sex discrimination complaint filed by an aggrieved female. The Illinois legislature passed and Governor James R. Thompson signed a bill that will make it far more difficult for Illinoisans to settle their disagreements out of court. The bill repealed earlier legislation allowing the private ownership of machine guns. Writers everywhere rejoiced when on January 21 a New York jury rejected the first-degree murder charge against Mr. Jack Henry Abbott, the *New York Review of Books*' jailbird Balzac, and settled on a first-degree manslaughter charge.

• In religious news, the Rev. Robert Cromey of San Francisco's Trinity Church has demanded that Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger resign from the Episcopal Church because of his position on nuclear weapons; and Mr. Curtis Walker, the gifted spiritualist, ventured from his home in Des Moines, Iowa to stand in the calf-deep snow of Mounteview, Idaho to "cast out all rabbits in the state of Idaho." Jack rabbits have recently plagued Idaho farmers, and Mr. Curtis, driven perhaps by the new volunteerism in the land, was glad to assist. Confiding that he has had this power for "as long as I can remember," Mr. Walker explained that it would take at least 24 hours before the last rabbits disappeared. "It's a religious thing," Mr. Walker observed, "I say a few words, concentrate and wish the rabbits away" —a process not dissimilar from that by which the Rev. Cromey would eliminate nuclear arms.

• Finally, in a follow-up on the Virginia trial of Mr. Orval Wyatt Loyd, apparently the court was not convinced by his story that he hacked his mother-in-law to death because he mistook her for an enormous raccoon. On January 28, he was sentenced to five years in prison—proof that creative writers of a homicidal inclination had best contain their art to New York. —*RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Red Runners

In his otherwise cogent letter in the January issue Mr. Henry Regnery saw fit to cite the following emanation from the German "conservative" Harald Ruddenklau, "political advisor to the Christian Democratic Union":

> The 20th century brought a new element into European history through the fact that the overwhelming intervention of the United States destroyed the European state structure, secured the survival and victory of the bolshevistic Soviet Union and helped the Soviet Union become a world power by handing over to it, by the elimination of Germany, the domination of Central Europe.

Ach so. And who sent back Lenin to Russia to foment a revolution? And who made the first treaty with Bolshevik Russia? And who had a secret treaty with Bolshevik Russia, training airmen and tankmen? And who made the open treaty with Stalin in 1939, dividing Eastern Europe with him, inviting the Russians to take over entire countries and one-half of Poland? And who started the Second World War, and who invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, an event which transformed a wretched semi-Asiatic country into one of the superpowers of the world. In sum, who let the Bolsheviks into Europe? Herr Regnery, your adored friends, compared to whose misdeeds Wilson and Roosevelt were but pale pharisees in the outer precincts of the temple. —*John Lukacs*
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Awful Disclosures

I have come to expect, as a loyal reader over these past few years, almost anything in the pages of your magazine. More often than not, these little surprises are amusing and well written, even when I do not agree, which is quite often.

But never in my wildest dreams did I expect to come across a twentieth-century equivalent of the Maria Monk tales. I am referring, of course, to John Podhoretz's review of *True Confessions* (February 1982), which at best is laughable and at worst an example of what my Jesuit instructors used to call invincible ignorance. Can Mr. Podhoretz be serious in calling the movie "a serious study of Catholicism"?

Aside from the poor literary quality of the review, the most offensive thing about it is the sheer idiocy of it all, which probably has Catholics, especially nuns and priests, rolling in the aisles. It's worse than having to listen to Phil Donahue give his opinions on medieval scholarship.

Really, Mr. Tyrrell, I have come to expect more from you. But then again, perhaps Mr. Podhoretz's review was actually intended for "Current Wisdom"—that would explain it. —*Kathleen E. Galvin*
Chicago, Illinois

Herzog's World

In his review of Robert Nozick's new book, Don Herzog ("Robert Nozick, the Congenial Philosopher," *The American Spectator,* January 1982) combines objective evidence and reason (of a sort) to reach the hard conclusion that there are no hard conclusions to be reasoned from objective evidence in moral disputes. The Herzogian world is such that we cannot, in principle, determine that even Hitler was truly wrong.

"But we don't want arguments to show why Hitlers are wrong, really wrong," Herzog concludes. "We want to keep them out of power. Failing that, we want to shoot them." That is essentially what Hitler said about the European Jewry, the difference being that he substantially succeeded.

Thus Herzog's conclusion is not the end of the matter. Absent the possibility, in principle, of objectively defined moral standards, rational men will resort to the methods of animals in settling disputes. Wherever such power struggles have occurred between a (philosophically neutered) Herzog and a Hitler (or a Mussolini, or a Stalin, or a Castro, or a Brezhnev, or a Mao, or a Khomeini, etc., *ad nauseum*), history has clearly shown who has kept whom out of power and, more often than not, who has shot whom. That is the logical dead-end of Herzog's subjectivism. One expects better from a fellow at Harvard. —*David Thomasson*
Columbia, Missouri

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CURRENT WISDOM

The Wall Street Journal

Four Platoes respond to the illustrious *Journal*'s trinity of essays discoursing on the Soviets' development, distribution, and use of chemical and biological warfare in liberated Afghanistan and Southeast Asia:

The Journal's emotionally charged editorials construct a tall tower of speculation on a few disputable shreds of evidence. Despite Secretary Haig's claims of "firm evidence" (Sept. 13) of Soviet biological warfare, the State Department (Sept. 14) produced only a single leaf and stem to support Haig's claim—a leaf and stem collected under unspecified conditions and transported without proper precautions against contamination. No scientist independent of the government would consider such a specimen to constitute scientific evidence for Haig's hypothesis. One is reminded of the State Department's presentation of a single bullet as proof that the U.S.S. Maddox was attacked by North Vietnamese PT boats in the Tonkin Gulf in August 1964.

Since the actions taken on the basis of the "Maddox bullet" are now thought by many to have been tragically mistaken, it would be wise to proceed with caution before making major policy decisions on the basis of a "Laotian leaf."

Douglas P. Lackey
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Baruch College
New York, NY

If the horrifying facts reported in your Nov. 6 editorial about "Yellow Rain" are true, I come to the opposite conclusion. Only by negotiated agreements with the USSR will we obtain any right to verification. If our grandchildren are to have any hope of living on a habitable earth, we need all the rights to inspect USSR activities that we can get.

Patricia C. Kenschaft
Montclair, NJ

If the world leaders, the corporate leaders, and the diplomats would use their positions to apply pressure on the Soviets maybe the atrocities would stop. I know they are aware of "Yellow Rain" because I'm sure they read this newspaper.

Robert J. Agen
Appleton, WI

I cannot understand all the fuss raised in your paper over "Yellow Rain." The implication of the fuss seems to be that its use, in war, is intolerable, and that the U.S. should object. Any nation that has dropped the atom bomb twice has little moral basis for objecting to the use of any weapon, even poison gas.

In the Pacific, where I fought in World War II, we employed flame throwers to flush out Japanese in caves. I still have nightmares about the young Japanese soldiers who ran out of these caves, burning like human torches, and dying a few yards from us in the most soul-wrenching agony. Had we used poison gas, the deaths would have been no less merciless or obscene and would probably have been quicker. Isn't that the supreme rationalization for the employment of any new and more lethal weapon: it would end the war faster and thus save lives.

Let's not waste our voices or our printer's ink protesting another horrible weapon; let's concentrate all our resources against the obscenity of war itself.

Stanley A. Frankel
Scarsdale, NY

[*November 23, 1981*]

Cambridge and Nuclear Weapons

From a timely pamphlet published by the City government of Cambridge, Massachusetts, scientific conclusions suggesting that if the Reds ever hit City Hall all YMCA activities will be held below ground:

Suppose a one-megaton bomb were dropped near ground level over Cambridge City Hall. Almost all Cambridge citizens would be killed. City Hall, the Central Square Post Office, and the YMCA and YWCA—all would disappear into a crater about 20 stories deep. A rim of deadly radioactive soil would be thrown up twice as far as where the Police Station, the City Hall Annex and the Manning Apartments for the elderly had been. Nothing recognizable would remain from the riverfront to City Hospital. Little of significance would be left standing in the rest of the City. This "end of the world" as we know it would occur within seconds.

[*Fall 1981*]

The Humanist

A fairly accurate facsimile of English from Helen Colton, family counselor, teacher, former faculty member of the Institute for Comprehensive Medicine in Beverly Hills, California, and a logician of heft:

Today's generation of young people has more new information, more stimuli bombarding them, more new events in a shorter space of time than any other group in history. As much new information probably becomes available and is transmitted around the world in a single day as became available during a whole decade when today's parents were young. There is much important and exciting information we can learn from our young if we would give up the traditions which say that elders automatically know better.

[*September/October 1981*]

T.V. Guide

Found in the San Francisco metropolitan edition of *T.V. Guide*, a notice of a very high-toned colloquium on the talk show "People Are Talking":

TRANSSEXUAL NUN! From Catholic nun to male psychotherapist! He's been through it all . . . now he's helping others cope with the trauma of change—"people are talking" Today 10 a.m. [on channel] 5.

[*November 12, 1981*]

Edmonton Sun

(Edmonton, Alberta)

Evidence that the populism that swept America in 1976 has finally arrived in Canada:

Failed Edmonton mayoral candidate John Buttrey was in court yesterday charged with assaulting an Edmonton Transit System bus.

The 55-year-old carpenter, who ran for mayor unsuccessfully last October, pleaded "justifiable provocation" for wilful damage after court heard a doctor had judged him fit to answer the charge.

Provincial Court Judge C.H. Rolf reserved Buttrey's plea and set a date next week for his election and plea.

Buttrey, who declined legal counsel, appears in court again Oct. 29.

Buttrey, a self-confessed ex-con and mental patient, advocated painting pimps purple and sang tunes such as Mammy and Bad, Bad Leroy Brown during his campaign speeches.

He also threatened to cut his throat if his bid for the mayor's seat was successful.

[*November 20, 1981*]

The New York Times

Good news and bad news from Mr. Murray Seeger bawling on the op-ed page of the venerated *Times*:

With employment benefits reduced, welfare recipients placed under new, more degrading rules, and illegal immigrants forcibly shipped back to their brutal homelands, America can hardly be called a caring country these days. . . . The conservatives-in-charge like to say that our society is burdened with too many taxes and governmental interference. The real problem is that we are the world's most wasteful, self-indulgent, vain society.

[*December 21, 1981*]

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

E.L. Doctorow, author and philosophe, endeavors a sensible critique of the present regime between trips to the bar:

I am waiting for a rising sound of protest from the halls of Congress, but I have not yet heard declared what we all know to be true—that the so-called economic policy issuing from its government, for all its supply-side jargon and budgetary pieties, is a simple, undeniable eviction procedure, a brutal eviction not only of widows and children but all citizens except the already privileged, all interests except those of wealth and business.

As a writer of fiction I could not get away with a portrayal of such unmitigated and sanctimonious cruelty; no landlord this infamous would be believed in a fiction of mine. Yet here he is, in one of his guises, pointing to charts and budget ledgers telling us who lives and who dies, and here he is in another, testifying about all the bombs and missiles we'll be able to make from the money we take away from the poor.

[*October 1, 1981*]

The Daily Pennsylvanian

The intellectual student newspaper of the University of Pennsylvania introduces Prof. Ann Matter and Miss Joan Shapiro, heads of that great university's Women's Studies program and strategists for the world-wide feminist uprising:

Working closely with Matter this year will be new assistant director Joan Shapiro, who recently finished work with HERS Middle Atlantic, a group which acts as a training forum for women aspiring to administrative positions. "I guess that's one of the things I bring to [the program]," she said, "a tremendous enthusiasm for seeing that this research continues."

Shapiro said Matter's religious studies background will be a positive influence on the program. "Obviously, religion is an area we have to look into," she said. "It is an area where women have had a lot of difficulty in rising or in feeling as if they belong". . .

Shapiro added that she came to new conclusions this summer about her own religious upbringing when discovering her "other" name Miriam.

"I just didn't realize . . . that Moses' sister was also named Miriam, and that she led the women out of Israel," Shapiro said. "And Moses—well, we all know Moses, but Miriam takes a back seat to him. It's things like that that make you feel very good."

[*September 30, 1981*]

Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette

The ever luminous Pete Hamill writes from New York on the plight of the folk heroes of American Liberalism:

No financially strapped American city can deal effectively with the growing population of illiterate, brutalized, half-insane killers who are roaming the streets with guns. They all need help. They're not getting it. The Reagan people will spend $208 billion on national security this year, meanwhile, Americans can't leave their homes without fear of murder.

[*January 3, 1982*]

The Los Angeles Times

Christian doings from the San Andreas fault:

Members of the wedding party knew it wasn't your usual marriage ceremony when the bridegroom the Rev. Cecil Williams Williams, told his bride, "Jan, you have corrected me, you have humbled me, and that's not easy. You have caused me to take some ridiculous risks You came and loved me in my screaming loneliness. Jan, you are very strange." The bride, Janice Mirikitani, replied that Williams had awakened "deep pools of water" within her and told the throng that "his love is big and amazing." The couple also vowed in San Francisco's Glide Memorial Church that together they could better battle racism, repression and social injustice and hardship than could either alone.

[*January 4, 1982*]

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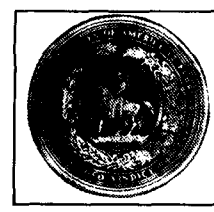

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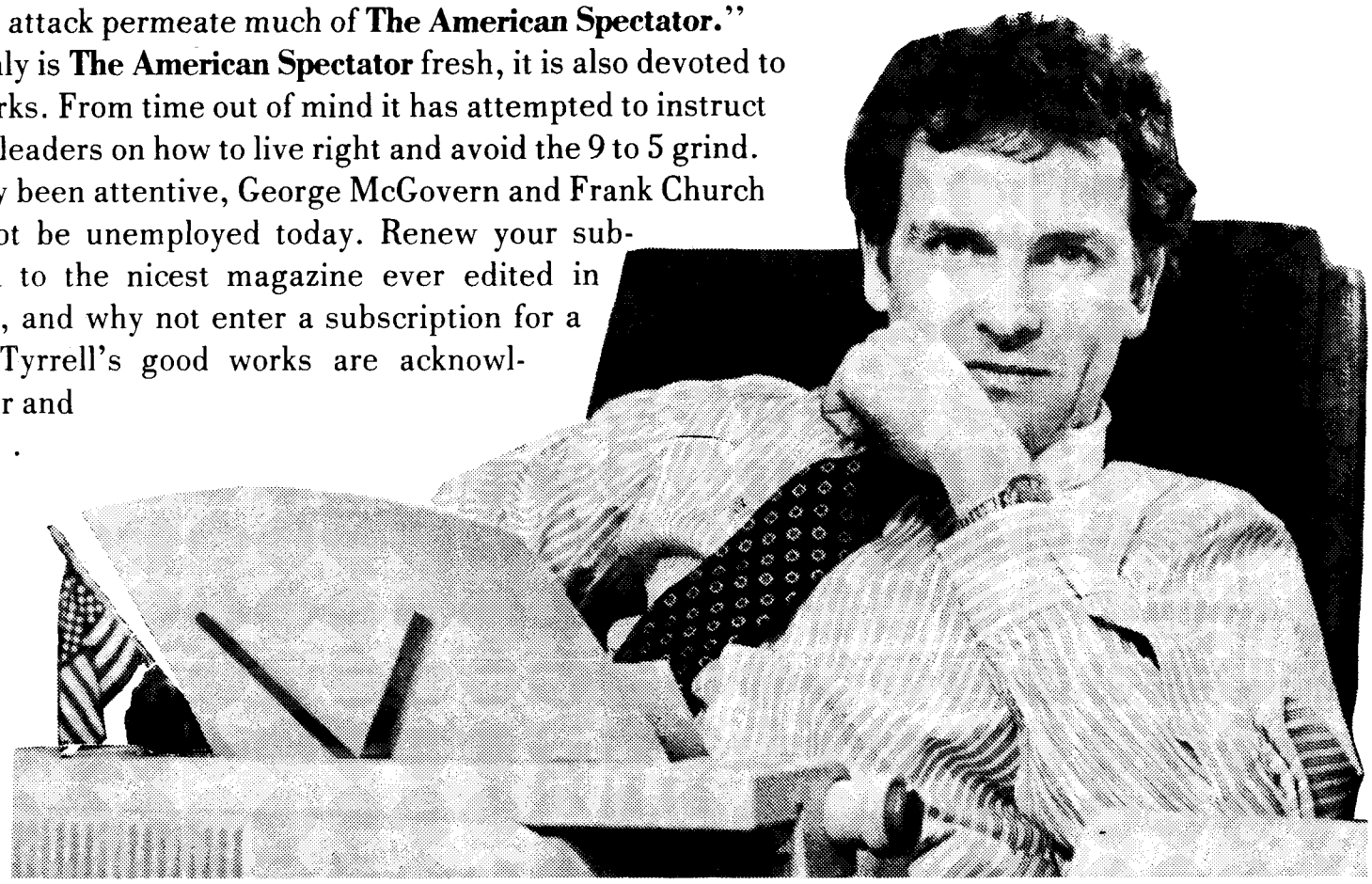

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